Islam and Christianity

in the Modern World

Being an exposition of The Qur'anic view of Christianity in the light of Modern Research

Dr. Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman

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FOREWORD

Maulana Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari came to us and went. A happier coming could not be; but a sadder going neither. He came to the Muslim people of south-eastern Asia as the ambassador of the intellectual empire of Islam to negotiate for reinvigorating and reconstructing the Muslim intellectual life, ultimately with the aim of, to use his own words said in reply to the Welcome Address given to him in Singapore, "assisting in raising up a great new edifice of Islamic civilisation among peoples which entered the fold of Islam at a time when the Islamic world had already lost its initial vitality and was on the way to succumb to the cultural onslaught of the anti-Islamic Western civilisation and could not therefore enjoy the opportunity of building up enduring and vigorous national Islamic traditions and culture". He went away, making all of us sad but nevertheless happy at his promise that he will come back to work for his great ideal.

Coming from an institution—the Muslim University of Aligarh—which is the pride of Muslim Asia, he created an abiding impression in the literary world of these parts. He volunteered to lead the Islamic movement inaugurated and established by his revered and renowned father-in-law, Hazrat Maulana Shah Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqi in 1928 in the form of the *All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society*, and it is with gratitude that we recall today his noble contribution, especially as the Honorary Editor of *The Genuine Islam*.

His thesis on *Muslims and Communism*, which was widely circulated, created a new perspective and served to clarify the thought of the youth. His revolutionary educational scheme presented a

most original and sound programme for the revival of our lost glory and our Islamic heritage. His memorable fight for the establishment of Islamic law in the Federated Malay States and his brilliant reply to the opponents of "The Mohammedan Offences Bill" earned the gratitude of Muslim Malaya and elicited high praise from the greatest exponent of British politics in eastern Asia, to wit, the editor of *The Straits Times*, who, though, as a front-rank opponent, he had written a most scathing editorial against the Bill a few days before, was so deeply impressed by Maulana Ansari's exposition that he wrote another editorial, seemingly as an apology, referring therein to Maulana Ansari as "that subtle and learned logician".

'Learned' and 'logician' Maulana Ansari certainly is, to which the present book bears ample testimony. Ever since the Christians succeeded in converting a few half-Muslimised backward tribes of Java, they have been engaged in creating an imposing network of missions among the Muslim populations of eastern and south-eastern Asia. Day-in and day-out they are busy with vilifying Islam and conspiring against Muslims. Islam, in its turn, has launched two organisations on its behalf, the *Jamiyyat-ul-Mohammediyyah* of Java and the *All Malaya Muslim Missionary Society* of the Malay Peninsula. The noble and great work that is being accomplished by these organisations in this connection received new impetus with the entry of Maulana Ansari into the field. Believing as he does in an active, as contrasted with the present-day passive, role of Islam, he entered the controversy with Archbishop Wand of Australia and turned the searchlights on Christianity itself. The results were highly encouraging. His honesty, sincerity, fair-mindedness and learning, displayed during the controversy, created a deep impression, and his masterly exposition, in *Trends in Christianity*, not only brought about general awakening among the Muslim youth but also succeeded in attracting several

broad-minded Christians to Islam.

The present book, which is the latest contribution of the author of the Islam-Christianity problem, forms a Message on Love from Islam to the Christian world and is being published with the aim of removing the misconceptions which Christians generally entertain against Islam and with the hope that all honest and fair-minded Christians will give it the serious consideration it fully deserves and will undertake an unbiased inquiry into the merits of Islam and Christianity.

Beit-ul-Ikhwah,
SINGAPORE. M.A. ALSAGOFF.
15*th November*, 1940.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

More than a generation has elapsed since *Islam and Christianity in the Modern World* was first published. This time has served to accentuate the tendencies in Christianity mentioned by the author in his chapter on "Christianity in the Modern World." Another far-reaching change is the significant increase in the Muslim population of traditionally Christian countries (viz., in Europe and America) through both conversion and migration. The presence of sizable Muslim populations in these countries (notably West Germany, France, U.K., U.S.A. etc.) has not only brought these two world religions into closer contact in a setting distinctly more favourable to Islam than the encounter with Christianity in the heyday of Western Imperialism and Colonialism, but has also enhanced the possibility of Islam filling the spiritual vacuum which characterises modern Christian Western civilization. Thus the topic of this book is still of contemporary relevance and interest.

In this edition, the first after the demise of the author in June 1974, the only change is the addition of a chapter "Islam among Religions" as an appendix. This chapter is taken from the author's monumental masterpiece, *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society* (World Federation of Islamic Missions, Karachi, 1973), which is perhaps the most important original work on Islam ever published in the English language.

Apart from the wide acclaim given to the book itself, this chapter has received separate recognition for its concise and effective classification and summary evaluation of the major religions of the world. It was only fitting that it be included as an appendix to *Islam and Christianity in the Modern World*.

Siddiq A. Nasir (Guyana) &
Imran N. Hosein (Trinidad & Tobago).
(Students of the late Dr. F.R. Ansari).

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

Islam contends that:

The founders of traditional Christianity have painted Jesus and his Creed in colours drawn from the pagan paintbox.

The present book is an attempt to evaluate this contention in the light of modern researches and recent tendencies and to judge the Christian claims accordingly.

It was the vituperative eloquence of Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer which first attracted me towards the subject. The interest thus created was kept alive by minor Christian controversialists until at last the Rev. Cash (*Moslem World in Revolution*), Dr. Wherry (*Islam and Christianity in India and the Far East*), and finally Archbishop Wand (*Mohammedanism and Christianity—Twentieth Century Trends*) pushed me into the open field.

Archbishop Wand's attempt was particularly fruitful. His essay on Islam inspired me to write a series of seven essays in the *Genuine Islam* in 1938, one of which entitled 'Trends in Christianity' was published in book-form by the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society of Singapore and circulated in the Far East.

The soundness of the argument developed in that book perturbed my Christian friends. They could not possibly challenge my contentions except on the seemingly plausible basis that my interpretation of the conclusions of modern researches was biased and defective. Such an accusation has been made on many an occasion and

is regarded by the advocates of Christianity as a patent remedy for protecting the faith of the general masses of lay Christians, though its transparent falsity must be obvious to all those who have studied the subject of Christian origins.

The accusation necessitated that I should state the argument in detail and prove the soundness of my conclusions by quoting my authorities at length. This I have accomplished in the present book and in doing so I have taken the greatest care that I should select only those authorities who may be acceptable to the Christians themselves. Indeed, a perusal of the book will reveal that an overwhelming majority of the authorities are professed Christians, including a large number of reputed Christian divines.

A fairer treatment of Christianity could not have been possible; and if still it is found that the latest researches disprove the claims of traditional Christianity—Bernard Shaw calls it Crosstianity—and prove the standpoint of Islam, would it be too much to appeal to the Christian world in general and the reformed Churches in particular to study and compare the merits of Islam and Christianity with an open mind?

Muslim University,
Aligarh (India):
11th Oct. 1940.

FAZL-UR-RAHMAN

INTRODUCTION

I have read in Moslem writings such deep and tender expressions of respect and reverence for Jesus that for the time I almost forgot, I was not reading the words of a Christian writer. How different, it is sad to say, has been the way in which Christians have spoken and written of Mohammed. Let us put it down to its true cause, ignorance.

—Rev. R. Maxwell King.

I

INTRODUCTION

CHRISTIAN MISREPRESENTATIONS

ON January 10th, 1938, the *Straits Times* of Singapore reproduced from the columns of the *Brisbane Courier Mail* an essay on *Mohammedanism and Christianity—Twentieth Century Trends*, written by Archbishop Wand of Brisbane (Australia). The essay opens with the following fascinating words:

"Rapid changes in world events are throwing the nations much closer together. In the sphere of international politics peoples are compelled to do what they can to obtain a better understanding of each other's point of view. It is a pity that so far religious people have not shown many signs of a desire to follow this example. Yet religion is a very potent factor in the formulation of social and political ideas, and complete mutual understanding will never be possible until there is some intimate knowledge on the part of a wide circle of thinkers of various creeds into which religion is divided.

"It is especially necessary that at present the Christian world should make itself acquainted with the beliefs and practice of Islam. A very large part of the human race has embraced this religion...... There is not likely to be a stable world-peace until some *modus vivendi* has been reached."

It is evident from this statement that the Archbishop has taken the trouble of writing his essay with the laudable aim of helping the Christian and Muslim peoples in 'obtaining a better understanding of each other's point of view' for the sake of achieving 'stable world-peace' which does not, however, exist at present because of the absence of an 'intimate knowlege' of each other's beliefs. A very noble attempt indeed! But all noble sentiments are paralysed the moment he embarks on the actual subject and discusses Islam and its Holy Prophet. He treats these subjects with a bias and inconsistency which is not only incompatible with the cause of Truth and World-Peace but also unworthy of a religious head of his eminence. On the very face of it, it is a foul piece of the usual Christian missionary propaganda. The cat comes out of the bag when he himself removes the cloak and reveals his real purpose by ending his tall talk with these words: "The observance of Mohammed's religion was more adapted for the drivers of camels than for the chauffeurs of Ford cars......the doors of Islam are being opened as never before to a sympathetic presentation of the Christian faith."

This leads one to ask: Is it not possible for Christian scholars to be honest when they speak on Islamic matters? Can they not further the cause of Christianity without reviling and blackmailing other religions? Is St. Paul's principle of speaking lies for the glory of God so honourable and so binding that the advocates of Christianity cannot do without it?

In his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism* (pp. 63-72), Mr. Bosworth Smith has given a brief account of Christian misrepresentation and vilification of Islam during the Middle Ages, which gives some idea of the depths of degradation to which Christian scholarship can sink when it is brought to bear on Islam. That account is full of such dirt and filth that no Muslim can even read it with patience.

One can only feel pity at the miserable plight which had befallen the intellects of those Christian savants. But more pitiable than that is the fact that matters have not improved much after all the intellectual advancement and enlightenment of modern West. Besides several others, Dr. S. M. Zwemer, Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, the Rev. Cash, the Rev. Dr. Wherry, and lately the Archbishop of Brisbane, have advanced the same old "charitable" traditions of Christendom.

The present writer remembers to have read not long ago that Dr. William Ralph Inge, who is one of the most brilliant Christian theologians, expressed his views on certain points relating to Islam and, when questioned as to his source of information, named, not the Qur'an or the Hadith, but the Arabian Nights. None can possibly challenge the authority of such well-informed writers!

Another and more amusing instance is the one related by the American Muslim diplomat and missionary, Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb[1]:—
"Since my return to my native country (America) I have been greatly surprised, not only at the general ignorance prevalent among so-called learned people regarding the life, character and teachings of the Arabian Prophet, but also at the self-confident readiness and facility with which some of these same people express their opinions of Mohammed and the Islamic system. A few editorial writers have afforded me considerable amusement by showing how little they know of Mohammed and Moslem history, and how bold and aggressive they could be with their meagre armament of facts. One well-known western editor, after referring to Mohammed as 'the famous Greek prophet', concluded half a column of inanity with the assertion that, 'others have tried to introduce Buddhism into America and failed, as Mr. Webb will fail'."

[1] *Islam in America*, pp. 8, 9.

Not much different is the Archbishop of Brisbane's display of Islamic scholarship. Without for the present entering into a detailed discussion of his statements on Islam, the following discovery may be quoted: "By this time Mohammedanism had spread in a great crescent around the shores of the Mediterranean. The crescent, by the way, which became the symbol of Mohammedan rule was not derived from the new moon, but from the putting together of *two tusk-shaped amulets*." Brilliant research indeed!

The Archbishop has wasted the whole midnight oil on misrepresenting Islam, but has conveniently avoided the discussion of trends in Christianity, the headlines of his essay notwithstanding. The only reference to Christianity is in connection with his boast that: "the doors of Islam are being opened as never before to a sympathetic presentation of the Christian faith". Well, it requires a lot of courage on the part of any one to try to live in a fool's paradise!

As matters stand, I feel it my duty to supply the deficiency in the Archbishop's attempt by tracing the Christian *trends*. The third chapter of this book has been especially allotted to the Archbishop's favourite topic, "Twentieth Century Trends." This task, however, I have undertaken not in a spirit of abuse, which is totally foreign to the conscience of Islam, but in the capacity of a follower of Jesus, the holy apostle of God and one of the prophets of Islam (peace and blessings of God be with him for all time to come!), and my endeavour has been to clear the position of Islam of the charges levelled against it by the Archbishop and others of his way of thinking, and to set forth my honest doubts concerning traditional Christianity in a purely academic spirit.

The Archbishop says: "He (i.e., the Holy Prophet Muhammad) had picked up, as well as he could, leading ideas from Jews and Christians, but he was too ignorant to pass them on without distortion."

In view of the aim which the Archbishop has in view, i.e., "a sympathetic (?) presentation of the Christian faith," the above allegation may be divided into two parts: (1) the Holy Prophet borrowed "leading ideas" from the Old Testament and Christianity; (2) the Holy Prophet was "too ignorant" of the teachings of the Bible and the intrinsic worth of Christianity.

As to the first, here are a few points of contrast between the teachings of Christianity and Islam :

Christianity	*Islam*
1. The conception of the *Triune God.*	1. Pure *Monotheism.*
2. Jesus was 'the only begotten *son of God*'.	2. Jesus was nothing else than *human;* he was a divinely inspired Teacher and a great and holy man.
3. Eve was the first to be deceived in the garden of Eden, and she in her turn	3. Adam and Eve both were simultaneously deceived. *Woman, therefore*

Christianity	*Islam*
was responsible for tempting Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. *Thus the curse of God rests on woman*, and she is 'the organ of the Devil', 'the foundations of the arms of the Devil, whose voice is the hissing of the serpent', 'the gate of the Devil', 'the road of iniquity', 'the sting of the scorpion', 'a daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of hell, the enemy of peace and of the wild beasts the most dangerous', etc., etc., according to St. Bernard, St. Anthony, St. Bonaventure, St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, St. John Damascene and others.	*enjoys equal status with man*. (I have discussed in some detail the blessings conferred on woman by Islam as also the treatment which she received from other religions and cultures, in my book: *Humanity Reborn*).
4. The sin of Adam and Eve was not forgiven. Hence *every child is born in sin*.	4. The sin of Adam and Eve was forgiven. *Every child is born sinless. Sin* is an acquisition and not a heritage.
5. The mission of Jesus was *to redeem* the sins of humanity through his blood.	5. The mission of Jesus was *to teach the way of leading upright life*. The doctrine of Atonement is untenable.
6. *Man can attain salvation by belief only*—by the belief that Jesus was the only begotten son of God and that he gave his	6. *The one essential condition for the attainment of salvation is that we combine righteous action with right belief.* Mere

Christianity	*Islam*
blood for washing the sins of mankind in a mysterious way.	passive belief is meaningless. The Islamic system, which comprehends all problems of mankind—spiritual, moral, social and political, must be followed in its entirety.
7. We cannot approach God without the *mediation of a priest.*	7. Every man and woman is his or her own priest or priestess and can approach God *without the mediation of anyone.*
8. *Ascetic life is a saintly life*—the lives of Jesus and the saints being models in this respect—and the state of celibacy is preferable to the married state for the attainment of spiritual eminence.	8. *Asceticism is unnatural.* The natural way of attaining eminence in the 'Kingdom of God' is to endeavour persistently for leading an upright life in the midst of temptations which challenge man in the social environment.
9. *Conception of Dualism*—"Give unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's."	9. *Islam does not recognise any form of Dualism.* Every action, whether 'religious' or 'secular', is a truly religious action when performed in the light of God's commands. Thus the whole life of a true Muslim from the mosque to the market and from the school to the battlefield is a religious life.

Christianity	*Islam*
10. *The Bible contains "irrational beliefs, crude science and indecent tales"* (Canon Barnes). As examples of obscenity, I may refer here only to the stories of Lot and David—two personages to whom the Bible attributes saintliness and immorality at the same time.	10. *The Qur'an is essentially rational, scientific and modern in its spirit.* With a view to give instances of practical ethics, it has narrated several stories which occur in the Bible, but it cleanly leaves out all irrational, obscene and contradictory accounts of those stories.

This is an off-hand list. But even so it is enough to show how far it was possible for the Holy Prophet Muhammad to borrow his knowledge from the Bible for employing it in the construction of the system of Islam. "It has been the fashion," says the orientalist Dr. Emmanuel Deutsch, "to ascribe whatever is good in Mohammedanism to Christianity. We fear this theory is not compatible with the results of honest investigation. For, of Arabian Christianity at the time of Mohammed, the less said perhaps the better......By the side of it......even modern Amharic Christianity, of which we possess such astounding accounts, appears pure and exalted."[1]

Coming now to the second part of the allegation: the best way to examine the charge of ignorance shall be to refer to those 'leading ideas' of Islam which have a direct bearing on Christianity itself, i.e., the Qur'anic teachings concerning Jesus, Bible and Christianity. This has been done in some detail in the following pages, particularly in the first and second chapters. An introductory sketch of the argument may, however, be presented here.

1 *The Quarterly Review*, No. 954, p. 316.

According to the teaching of the Qur'an, every country of the world had its divine messengers, who were, one and all, human beings, and who were sent to mankind, at different periods of history, ever since the first beginnings of human life on earth. Belief in all of them is an article of the Islamic faith. The religion preached by all those Messengers or Prophets was the same, namely, Islam (lit. *submission to the Will of God*), though it received its perfection of *form* in the Qur'anic Revelation. Therefore all the divinely inspired teachers of mankind are the prophets of a Muslim, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (God bless him!) being the last and final one. A Muslim believes in all the revealed scriptures, though he follows only the Qur'an, firstly, because it claims to contain the authentic teachings given in all the former scriptures, and, secondly, because none of the former scriptures exists in its original and pure form.

Qur'anic Contentions regarding Christianity

This is the background of the Qur'anic contentions regarding Christianity.

Thus, according to the Qur'an:

(1) *Jesus was not divine but human. He was one of the great teachers of mankind and a holy Prophet of God, by Whom he was appointed to reform the race of Israel. He did not bring any new law, though Divine Revelation was granted to him:*

"He (*i.e.*, Jesus) is not but a *servant* (of God) on whom We (*i.e.*, God) bestowed favour and We made him a *pattern for the Children of Israel.*"[1]

"He (*i.e.*, Jesus) spake: Lo! I am the slave of God. *He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet.*

[1] *The Holy Qur'an*, XLIII: 59, cf. also the verse: "an Apostle to the Children of Israel" (III: 48).

"And hath made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and hath enjoined upon me prayer and alms-giving so long as I remain alive,

"And hath made me dutiful toward her who bore me, and hath not made me arrogant, unblest;

"Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive (along with the rest of humanity)!

"Such was Jesus, son of Mary: (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt;

"*It befitteth not (the Majesty of) God that He should take unto Himself a son.* Glory be to Him! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only 'Be!' and it comes to exist.

"And lo! God is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him. That is the right path."[1]

"And we caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow *in their footsteps* (*i.e.*, the footsteps of the Jewish Prophets preceding him), verifying what was (of the Law and the Prophets) before him in the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light."[2]

(2) *The present versions of the Bible are the work of Jewish and Christian priests and they are not, therefore, Divine; the New Testament is not a faithful record of the life and teachings of Jesus:*

"Are they then unaware that God knoweth that which they keep hidden and that which they proclaim?

---

[1] *Ibid.* XIX : 30—36.

[2] *Ibid.* V: 46.

"Among them are the ignorant who know the Scripture not except from hearsay. They but guess.

"Therefore woe be unto those who write the Scripture with their hands and then say, 'This is from God', that they may purchase a small gain therewith. Woe unto them for what their hands have written, and woe unto them for what they earn thereby."[1]

"......and they say: It (i.e., the current Bible) is from God, while it is not from God; and they tell a lie against God whilst they know."[2]

(3) *Traditional Christianity is of Pagan, and not Divine, origin:*

"And the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of God. These are the words of their mouths; *they imitate the saying (or teaching) of the Pagans (lit. those who turned away from the Divine Light) preceding them*.......and they were enjoined that they should serve one God only; there is no deity but He; far be from His glory what they set up (with Him)."[3]

"Say (O Muhammad): O People of the Scripture! Stress not in your religion other than the truth, and follow not the low desires (*i.e.*, degraded religious conceptions) of the people (*i.e.*, the Pagans) who erred of old and led many astray and fell away from the right path (*i.e.*, the true conception of religion)."[4]

(4) *The condition of Christianity (as also of other religions) having become corrupt, the All-Wise and Merciful God granted His Revelation to mankind again in the seventh century A.C.; this Revelation is*

[1] *Ibid.* II: 77—79.

[2] *Ibid.* III: 77. Refer also to II: 75, IV: 46, V: 12—14, 44—47, 61.

[3] *Ibid.* IX: 30, 31.

[4] *Ibid.* V:77.

the Holy Qur'an and the Messenger who was entrusted with it is the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may his memory be ever green!):

'Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have wrought."[1]

"O People of the Scripture! Now hath Our Messenger (Muhammad) come unto you expounding unto you much of that which ye used to hide in the Scripture, and forgiving much. Now hath come unto you light from God and a plain Scripture, whereby God guideth him who seeketh His pleasure unto paths of peace. He bringeth them out of darkness unto light by His decree, and guideth them unto a straight path."[2]

This, in brief, is the Qur'anic view of Christianity, and, as will become evident from the forthcoming discussions, a most rational, well-founded and sound view. That it should have excited animosity in the hearts of Christian priesthood was only natural. But most unfortunate for the cause of Truth was the fact that the prolonged political conflict between the Muslim world and the West gave an extraordinary opportunity to the Christian clergy to create a lasting hatred of Muslims in the minds of westerners, and the absolutely baseless calumnies which were manufactured by a designing priesthood in connection with Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet added fuel to the fire, so much so that even to-day, after the downfall of traditional Christianity and the thorough triumph of scientific spirit, the most enlightened Europeans and Americans find it difficult to rise above their inherited prejudices against Islam. "Even the most eminent of European orientalists," observes the learned German Muslim theologian and scholar, Muhammad Asad Weiss, "have made

[1] *Ibid.* XXX: 41.

[2] *Ibid.* V: 15, 16.

themselves guilty of an unscientific partiality in their writings on Islam. In their investigations it almost appears as if Islam could not be treated as a mere object of scientific research, but as an accused standing before his judges. Some of the orientalists play the role of a public prosecutor bent on securing conviction; others are like a counsel for the defence who, being personally convinced that his client is guilty, cannot but half-heartedly plead for 'mitigating circumstances'. All in all the technique of the deductions and conclusions adopted by most of the European orientalists reminds of the proceedings of the famous Courts of Inquisition set up by the Catholic Church against its opponents in the Middle Ages: that is to say, they hardly ever investigate historical facts independently, but start, almost in every case, from a foregone conclusion dictated by prejudice. They select the witnesses according to the conclusion they intend to reach *a priori*. Where an arbitrary selection of witnesses is impossible, they cut parts of the evidence of the available ones out of the context, or they interpret their statements in the spirit of an unscientific malevolence, without attributing any weight to the representation of the case by the other party, that is, the Muslims themselves."[1]

However, Europe, though still greatly ignorant of Islam, has accepted the Qur'anic view of Christianity as a result of her own intellectual awakening. And this intellectual awakening being the outcome of Islamic civilisation, the Word of God has been directly fulfilled and the claim of Islam established:

"Fain would they (i.e., Jews and Christians) put out the light of God with their mouths, but God disdaineth (aught) save that He shall perfect His light, however much the disbelievers are averse.

"He it is Who hath sent His Messenger

[1] *Islam at the Cross-roads*, pp. 53, 54.

(Muhammad) with the guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, however much the idolators may dislike."[1]

Christian Testimony

The acceptance of the Qur'anic view of Christianity by European scholars, including some of the most eminent Christian divines, is a fact which forms the main theme of this book and will be treated in full in the following chapters. A glimpse of it may, however, be obtained from the following references.

Divinity of Jesus

The Rev. Dr. A. B. Bruce, D.D., in his article on "Jesus" in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, points out that, while in the Gospel of St. Luke Jesus is called "the Lord" about a dozen times, the earlier Gospels of St. Mathew and St. Mark refer to him simply as "Jesus"—"a fact which seems to indicate *the gradual evolution of the belief in His divinity*."[2]

"The celebrated text of three witnesses (John, I. V. 7)," says John Davenport,[3] "which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, has been proved, by the labours of Newton, Gibbon, Porson and others to have been an interpolation; and Clamet himself acknowledges that this verse is not found in any ancient copy of the Bible. *Jesus taught the belief in One God*, but Paul, with the Apostle John, who was a Platonist, despoiled Christ's religion

[1] *The Holy Qur'an*, IX: 32,33

[2] A very significant fact in this connection is the confusion which prevailed in the early Church regarding the nature of the Trinity. The council of Nice held in 325 A. C. decided that Christ was truly God, co-equal and co-eternal with his Father—separate yet one. The council of Constantinople held in 381 A. C. determined that he was also truly man. The council of Ephesus held in 431 A. C. resolved that the two natures were indivisibly one. The council of Chalcedon held in 451 A. C. established that the two natures were nevertheless perfectly distinct. Constantine II (581 A.C.) accepted the doctrine that in Christ the two wills were harmonised. Heraclitus by his decree of 630 A. C. affirmed that while in Christ there were two natures there was only one will. The Catholic Church maintained that there were two wills although they always coincided.

[3] *Mohammad and Koran*, pp. 74, 75, foot-note.

of all its unity and simplicity, by introducing the incomprehensive *Trinity* of Plato or *Triad* of the East and also by deifying two of God's attributes, namely, His Holy Spirit or the *Agion Pneuma* of Plato and His Divine Intelligence, called by Plato the *Logos* (Word), and applied under this form to Jesus (John I)."

Mission of Jesus

"At the appearance of Jesus," observes the same writer, "the Jews inhabiting Judea were extremely corrupt in their morals, and a criminal self-love and egotism having been long spread among them, both priests and people, there was nothing to be found but avarice, rapine, injustice and oppression, for placing their righteousness in the rigid observance of some ceremonies and formulae of religion, they had entirely lost its real substance. To restore this seems to have been the whole aim, drift and design of the mission of Christ, for to that all his doctrines plainly tend—a consideration sufficient to show that *the Christian religion in its foundation was but the renewing of that of Moses*."[1]

"It is also plain from the books attributed to the Evangelists that the apostles had some doubts whether any but the Jews were to be admitted into the benefit of their new dispensation, though upon a consultation it was determined that the Gentiles should have the Gospel preached unto them."[2]

Dr. Harnack remarks;[3] "Jesus Christ brought forward no new doctrine."

According to Zeller[4]: "If every one was baptized as soon as he acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, the first Christians could have been aware of no other essential difference from the Jews."

[1] *Mohammad and Koran*, p. 139.

[2] *Ibid*. p. 85.

[3] *Dogmengeschichte*, 2nd ed., p. 39.

[4] *Vortrage*, p. 26.

Authenticity of the Bible

"The Bible," says Sir Richard Gregory, "*fails to justify faith in its inerrancy on account of its inconsistency with itself*, its variance from current concepts of what should constitute Christian belief, and from current codes of morality, its failure in its adaptability as regards statements of fact and the discoveries of science relating to the record of happenings in the cosmic process, and finally *in its inability to withstand the investigation of textual criticism*, when directed to the claims of authorship upon which the authenticity of its various parts has been based......

"*Even in the early Church, from the days of Origen onwards, there was uneasiness as to the character of the text and content of the Bible*.......

"Origen and others of the Fathers after him interpreted the inconsistencies and other weaknesses of the Biblical text as allegory and metaphor. As a consequence of these condonations and interpretations of the text there grew up a body of apologetic and exegetic literature based in part on tradition not embodied in the text, and dealing with both doctrine and ritual, which came to be in their sphere as authoritative as the original. It was out of these that there grew the dissensions, which in their turn have given rise to divisions, leading to the separate existence of the Greek and Eastern Churches, the uprising of the numerous heretical sects of the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the creation of the various Protestant Churches, and finally within the Protestant faith the separate forms of belief which have brought about, among others, the separation of Non-conformity from the ritual and doctrine of the Church of England."[1]

[1] *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, pp. 82, 83.

Condition of Christianity at the advent of Islam

The corruption of Christianity was complete by the end of the sixth century. As this fact forms one of the supports in the Qur'anic argument regarding the prophethood of Muhammad and as our Christian friends either belittle its importance or avoid it totally in their controversies with Muslims, it is necessary to view its different aspects in the light of the findings of western authorities, particularly of the Christian divines.

St. Hilary, the bishop of Potiers in the fourth century A.C. and one of the Fathers of the Church, who, "from the peculiar hardships of his situation, was inclined to extenuate rather than to aggravate the errors of the Oriental clergy", "unwarily deviating into the style of a Christian philosopher", wrote[1] :

"It is a thing equally deplorable and dangerous that there are as many creeds as opinions among men, as many doctrines as inclinations, and as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us; because *we make creeds arbitrarily and explain them as arbitrarily*. The Homoousion is rejected, and received, and explained away by successive synods. The partial or total resemblance of the Father and of the Son are a subject of dispute for these unhappy times. Every year, nay every moon, we make new creeds to describe invisible mysteries. We repent of what we have done, we defend those who repent, we anathematise those whom we defended. We condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves or ours in that of others; and reciprocally tearing one another to pieces, we have been the cause of each other's ruin."

The famous Church historian, Dean Milman, supports the above statement with the following observations[2]:

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[1] Gibbon: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II, p. 411.

[2] *Latin Christianity*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. 4.

"The Bishop of Constantinople was the passive victim, the humble slave, or the factious adversary, of the Byzantine Emperor; he rarely exercised a lofty moral control upon his despotism. The lower clergy, whatever their more secret beneficent or sanctifying workings on society, had sufficient power, wealth and rank to tempt ambition or to degrade to intrigue; not enough to command the public mind for any great salutary purpose, to repress the inveterate immorality of an effete age, to reconcile jarring interests, to mould together hostile races, in general they ruled, when they did rule, by the superstitious fears, rather than by the reverence and attachment of grateful people. They sank downward into common ignorance, and yielded to the worst barbarism—a worn-out civilisation. Monasticism withdrew a great number of those who might have been energetic and useful citizens into barren seclusion and religious indolence: but except when the monks formed themselves, as they frequently did, into fierce political or polemic factions, they had little effect on the condition of the society. They stood aloof from the world—the anchorites in their desert wildernesses, the monks in their jealousy-barred convents, and secure, as they supposed, of their own salvation, left the rest of mankind to inevitable perdition."

About the general degeneration, the Rev. Dr. White remarks[1]:

"Divided into numberless parties, on account of distinctions the most trifling and absurd, contesting with each other from perverseness, and persecuting each other with rancour, corrupt in opinion and degenerate in practice, the Christians of this unhappy period seemed to have retained little more than the name and external profession of their religion. Of a Christian Church scarce any vestige remained. The most profligate principles and absurd opinions were universally predominant; ignorance

[1] *Sermons*, II.

amidst the most favourable opportunities of knowledge, vice amidst the noblest encouragements to virtue, a pretended zeal for truth, mixed with the wildest extravagances of error, an implacable spirit of discord about opinions which none could settle, and a general and a striking similarity in the commission of crimes, which it was the duty and interest of all to avoid.

"The images of the saints who had laboured to disseminate, and the bones of the martyrs who had died to confirm, the faith, were now, by the arts of a designing priesthood, and the ignorance of a superstitious multitude, held up as proper objects of religious adoration.

"The blind fury of superstitious zeal extinguished the tenderest sentiments of nature; the majesty of the laws was trampled on and violated with impunity; the cities of the East were deluged with blood."

On an appeal by Dean Wace and others to the *authority of the First Six Centuries*, the Church Association of England adopted the following resolution:—

"*The first six centuries were characterised by fierce controversies as to the most fundamental verities of the Christian faith by the wholesale introduction of adult converts, who brought with them heathen and Jewish habits of thought and who were in many cases of a low type of civilisation; and the adulteration of the Gospel was further facilitated by the purely nominal adhesion of persons anxious to stand well with the first Christian emperors. The period was of incessant fermentation and of rapid and continuous change.*"[1]

These statements are final in themselves. In the forthcoming discussions, however, I shall endeavour to prove that the first six centuries of Christian history

[1] Vivian Phelips: *The Churches and Modern Thought*, pp. 118.

witnessed the complete paganisation of the simple faith of Jesus. In case Archbishop Wand finds himself unable to see eye to eye with me, it will be his duty to prove historically at least three important points: (1) that the New Testament is an authentic record of the actions and teachings of Jesus and has not suffered any changes during the last two thousand years; (2) that the pre-Christian legends of sun-worship cults are post-Christian fabrications; (3) that the dates of events in the life of Jesus, which it is impossible not to interpret in the light of the sky-scriptures, because of their coincidence with the dates of sun-festivals of a similar import, are not correct; though that would go against his own position as a Christian. Anyway, the Archbishop shall have to establish the historical authenticity of Christianity first. When that is done, the next step would be to judge, in the light of internal evidence, the respective claims of Islam and Christianity as divinely revealed world-faiths.

The Archbishop says: "The observance of Mohammad's religion was more adapted for the drivers of camels than for the chauffeurs of Ford cars. The very adoption of western dress has made a difference......This leads one to think that the doors of Islam are being opened as never before to a new and sympathetic presentation of the Christian faith."

This statement can be met from two sides: first, by posing the question, How far is Christianity itself accepted by the 'chauffeurs of Ford cars'? and, next, by expounding the message of Islam and showing it to be the only religion suited to the requirements of enlightened humanity. As regards Islam, it has been discussed fundamentally, though briefly, in the last chapter of this book. Here I may throw some light on the comparative strength of Islam and Christianity in the modern world.

It is an open secret that Christianity is dying to-day in her own homelands. Being virtually powerless in meeting the attacks of rational criticism, historical as well as philosophical, it is losing ground every day in proportion to the power which the 'chauffeurs of Ford cars' are gaining. "The average European—he may be a Democrat or a Fascist, a Capitalist or a Bolshevist, a manual worker or an

intellectual—knows only one positive 'religion', and that is the worship of material progress, the belief that there is no other goal in life than to make that very life continually easier and, as the current expression goes, 'independent of nature'. The temples of this 'religion' are the gigantic factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, dancing halls, hydro-electric works; and its priests are bankers, engineers, film-stars, industrial barons, record-airmen."

A general misconception prevails in certain quarters that the presence of powerful Christian missionary organisations in the East is due to the existence of a rigid hold of Christianity on western minds. Facts however belie any such assumption. What many a westerner thinks about Christian missions is evident from the following statement of Paul Hutchinson on *The Ordeal of Western Religion*[1]:

"The Missionary no longer stands by himself; he blends into the background formed by western statecraft. He is seen in Asia and Africa as an integral part of the imperialistic advance of the western state. Sometimes he has been the unwilling dupe of the statecraft, as in the case of those missionaries whose deaths have been made the pretext for territorial demands. The origin of the 'Shantung issue' which nearly wrecked the Paris Peace Conference is a case in point. Sometimes he has been the conscious agent of western aggression, as in the feverish attempts of Dr. Peter Parker, honoured as the pioneer medical missionary in China, to induce the United States to annex the island of Formosa—all, of course, as a prelude to the Christianisation of the Formosans."

The frank admission by Dr. E. A. Burroughs, bishop of Ripon, which Samuel M. Zwemer has quoted in his infamous book: *Across the World of Islam* (p. 37), is conclusive:

[1] *The Forum*, January, 1933.

"Recent events have shown that we are losing our former sense of imperial mission, the instinct to take up the 'White Man's Burden'......Already we are finding that without the Christian missionary impulse we shall be hard put to it to staff our Indian Empire....*I believe that if all facts could be assessed it would be found that the empire is held together.... most of all by the Christian missionaries in all lands, who are the most effectual servants of the imperial ideal.*"

The state of affairs at home was revealed by the Bishop of Leicester at the Conference of Evangelical Churchmen held at Oxford in 1935. He said[1]:

"There are 17,000,000 in this country (i.e., England) who are not in touch with any Church.... There is a kind of spiritual inertia—a spirit of defeatism......Most congregations are quite vague as to the purpose of their church in the parish...... I am afraid there are a number of clergy who have no Gospel that they can preach with assurance."

In Australia itself, the Archbishop of Brisbane must have witnessed the same thing. For, soon after his pronouncements on Islam and Christianity, the *Sunday Times* of Singapore, in its issue for May 29th, 1938, reported:

"*In Australia's cities and big towns today, the spiritual position is utterly pathetic. Only from 5 to* 10 *per cent of population go to church,*" said Mr. J. Edwin Orr, Irish author and evangelist, on arrival at Adelaide.

"The wickedest city of Australia is Kalgoorlie. There church attendance is minute. Bars are open all day on Sundays, and illegal betting shops flourish. I have seen people staggering drunk there at 9 a.m.

[1] *The Hindustan Times*, May 4, 1935.

"The local Minister's fraternal has brought these matters to the notice of the Government, but nothing has been done."

Verily, European and American Christianity is meant only for export and not for home consumption!

The Archbishop has deliberately confused the issue by referring to the modern western civilisation as a Christian civilisation, thus exposing himself to the charge of ignorance. It was Islam, and not Christianity, which brought about the western Renaissance, and the modern scientific culture, though now more under the pre-Christian Roman culture as far as its emotional side is concerned, was born in the Muslim universities of Spain. The Christian Church, in fact, fought against Science and Progress for centuries and it was not until it had suffered many defeats in succession and found itself powerless that it signed the truce. One of the greatest churchmen of our day has admitted this fact, though with a deep sense of injury and pain:

"The Dark Ages, and even the Middle Ages which followed them, are to the scientist a melancholy chapter in human history.......

"The truth is, I think, that the Reformation not only checked but obscured the scientific progress which had begun in the century which preceded it. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation were, from the point of view of secular culture, a retrogression......It is useless to ask whether the Catholics or the Protestants were the most guilty of this set-back to civilisation......Catholics and Protestants vied with each other in denouncing the new theories......Those churchmen who airily declare that there is no longer any conflict between Christianity and science are either very thoughtless or are wilfully shutting their eyes. There *is* a very serious conflict, and the challenge was presented

not in the age of Darwin, but in the age of Copernicus and Galileo."[1]

While Christianity suffers in this way, the case of Islam is altogether different. During the last one century, the world of Islam has been passing through a most severe type of political ordeal and has been continuously exposed, as a result, to all sorts of intellectual, social and moral evils. But it is a miracle of Islam that while the world-population of Muslims was only 220 millions fifty years ago, it is more than 700 millions today. This one act alone is enough to prove the inexhaustible inherent vitality of Islam.

To attribute to Islam a reactionary nature because of the present shortcomings of the Muslim world would mean throwing out a false challenge in the face of history. The fact cannot be gainsaid that it was Islam and Islam alone which roused the world from its death-like sleep in the seventh century, which raised the Arabs as well as the non-Arabs to the highest pinnacle of glory in all realms of human activity—religious, moral, social and intellectual, and which ultimately brought Europe out of the darkness of the semi-barbarism of Middle Ages and taught her science and philosophy and inaugurated the Renaissance.

Again, to conclude from the success which western ideals have gained in certain Muslim quarters that Islam is a 'spent force' would be nothing less than self-deception and miscalculation of the dynamic forces of Islam. This is recognised and admitted by all, except the over-zealous and ill-meaning Christian missionaries, who have to deny it to keep their business going. Let Archbishop Wand read the clear verdict of a western specialist, Prof. H.A.R. Gibb:

"In introducing our discussion of westernisation the general statement was made that the Moslem

1 Dean W. R. Inge: *The Church in the World*, pp. 153, *et. seq.*

world desires to be westernised. At the outset of this part of our investigation another general statement, even more categorical and no less fundamental, must also be made. *The Moslem peoples remain deeply attached to the religion of Islam and intensely convinced of its superiority. That here and there individual Moslems, especially of the upper classes, are lukewarm in their faith and neglectful of its observances, or even confess themselves atheists, matters as little as that amongst those who call themselves Moslems there are groups whose religion is little more than a compound of primitive superstitions. The vital forces of Islam, as a creed, as a rule of life, and as an ethical system, remain unimpaired.* The critical moment which threatened at the end of the nineteenth century has been passed......The very fact that Islam is no longer a thing to be taken on trust, but in this age of stress and disintegration of the old social order, a thing to be fought for, is itself a powerful stimulus to a new appreciation of its value. Islam has always been religion-conscious; to-day it is more so than ever......The sense of devotion to the person of Muhammad and the enthusiasm which it evokes amongst all classes may well prove to be one of the most significant features in modern Islam. 'They call me an atheist,' said recently *one of the most prominent exponents of western thought* in Egypt, apropos of certain European works on the early history of Islam, 'but when I read what L—writes about Muhammad I am so filled with indignation that I feel myself a stauncher Moslem than any of my critics.' If those who deny the vitality of Islam in Turkey or elsewhere were to try a similar test, they might perhaps find cause to revise their opinions."[1]

It is indeed sad that the over-bubbling of the crusading spirit blinded the Archbishop of Brisbane to the real issue—the issue, namely, of the disintegration and fast-approaching death of Christian-

[1] *Whither Islam?*, pp. 343, 350.

ity in her own independent, powerful and prosperous homelands. It is self-evident that, given all the political paraphernalia of world-supremacy, nothing else than the inherent defects and shortcomings of Christianity have been responsible for its downfall. In fact, it could never have otherwise fallen to its lot to suffer from the present indifference, nay, hostile opposition, of the very people whose forefathers shed their blood for it for more than 1,500 years, had it not proved absolutely impotent in satisfying the demands of sane and rational thought.

Ignorance, it is said, is bliss. But self-imposed ignorance must only lead to hell in the long run. The following pages will show how mortally wounded stands Christianity as a 'real world religion' and rival of Islam.

CHRISTIANITY

Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that we shall not take each other for lords beside Allah:

O People of the Scripture! Why disbelieve ye in the revelations of Allah, when ye (yourselves) bear witness (to their truth)?

O People of the Scripture! Why confound ye truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth?

—Al-Qur'an, III: 64, 70, 71.

II

EVIDENCES FOR CHRISTIANITY

(*A*) *INTERNAL EVIDENCE*

FOR every one who calls himself a Christian, and calls himself so consistently, the basic dogma of belief is, as it naturally should be, that the Bible is genuinely, utterly and irrevocably the Word of God and the authentic testament of Christianity. That this is not a mere assumption but a fact of history is known to all students of the Christian religion. For instance, the Blasphemy Act of Protestant England lays down that anyone who denies the "divine authority" of the "Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments" shall not be allowed to hold any public office and shall, on a second conviction, be sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Similarly, the Vatican Council of 1870, "speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost", declared that the Old and New Testaments "have God for their author and, as such, have been delivered to the Church". "The Bible," said Dr. Bayley in his book entitled *Verbal Inspiration*, "cannot be less than verbally inspired. Every word, every syllable, every letter, is just what it would have been had God spoken from heaven without any human intervention. Every scientific statement is infallibly correct; all its history and narratives of every kind are without any inaccuracy."

This being the case, the only right conclusion that can be deduced is what a writer once stated in the *Church Times* (February 10, 1905): "The truth of the message is intimately connected with the authenticity of the record, and a critical theory which assails the one assails the other." In other words, the case for Christianity stands or falls with proof or disproof of the genuineness of the Bible. And not only that. The charge of ignorance, so ignorantly brought against the Holy Prophet Muhammad by Archbishop Wand and many of his compatriots also stands or falls similarly.

A Muslim may, therefore, ask: Can we honestly regard the Bible as the Word of God? Is the New Testament a genuine record of the life and teachings of Jesus? Unfortunately for Christianity, the reply which the greatest *Christian* scholars who have devoted their lives to the textual and historical problems of the Bible during the last one century is in the negative. "With the advance in the technique of textual criticism in the course of the last generation, with a more searching analysis of the matter of the text, and with the use of the comparative method in evaluating the tradition embodied in the narrative, it has become even more patently evident that orthodox opinion in regard to the authenticity of the Bible cannot be maintained."[1]

The subject of Biblical Criticism is so vast that it would be beyond the scope of a small chapter to give even a sketchy outline of the problems and discuss them briefly. Any attempt in that direction would require a separate volume. Apart from this, we are concerned here mainly with *evaluating* the conclusions which the European research scholars have arrived at. The most appropriate course, therefore, would be to state those conclusions and evaluate them, and to this procedure I feel the Archbishop should have no objection.

[1] Sir Richard Gregory: *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 86.

The sole point where he can differ with me is the selection of authorities. For there are two categories of Biblical critics: (1) Agnostics and others who are openly hostile to Christianity; (2) Professional representatives of Christianity. I shall select the second group in order to avoid the least chance of error, and even among them I shall take only those who, as theologians and ministers, have been the pillars of orthodox Churches. If in spite of all these precautions I am accused of ignorance, inaccuracy or dishonesty, I shall be ready to discuss the subject on the lines which the Archbishop may himself propose.

Old Testament

First as to the *Old Testament*. Canon A. F. Kirkpatrick, D.D., who was Master of Selwyn College, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, and Canon of Ely Cathedral, writes in his standard work: *The Divine Library of the Old Testament* (a book selected for examination by the Christian Evidence Society in March, 1907):-

"The books (of the Old Testament) were constructed out of earlier narratives; some were formed by the collections of poetry or prophecies; some betray marks of a reviser's hand; and even books which bear the names of well-known authors in some cases contain matter which must be attributed to other writers." As regards the last twenty-seven chapters of *Isaiah*, "I do not see how we can resist the conclusion that these chapters were not written by *Isaiah* but by an unknown prophet towards the close of the Babylonian Exile;......it will inevitably seem to many students of the Bible that, in assigning the prophecy to a date so near to the events which it foretells, we are detracting from its truly predictive character and diminishing its value." "The *Psalms* like the *Proverbs*, have a long literary history. They are poems by different authors, and David may be one of them." "Modern criticism claims, and claims

with justice, that the *Hexateuch*, like so many of the other books, is composite in its origin, and has a long literary history." "That the *Pentateuch* was entirely written by Moses is merely a Jewish tradition, which passed into the Christian Church and was commonly accepted until modern times. Some of the variants of the Septuagint from the Hebrew text are due, no doubt, *to errors and interpolations and deliberate alterations;* but after all allowance has been made for these, I do not see how any candid critic can resist the conclusion that many of them represent variations existing in the Hebrew text from which the translation was made." "It was probably at the very beginning of this period (from the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the fifth century), towards the close of the first century A.D., that the final settlement of an authoritative text took place......How came it that all the copies containing other readings have disappeared?......Copies differing from it (i.e., the standard text) would die out or be deliberately destroyed." "*The oldest Hebrew manuscript in existence, of which the date is known, was written in* 916 *A.D.*—i.e., separated by more than a thousand years from the latest of the works included in the canon."

These conclusions utterly destroy the divine character of the Old Testament. Dr. Kirkpatrick is conscious of it and, being a clergyman, feels uneasy about it. He finally offers the following fundamental question, but leaves it unanswered: "In what sense, it is asked, can this legislation, which is now said to be Mosaic in elemental germ and idea only, and to represent not the inspired deliverance of a supremely great individual, but the painful efforts of many generations of law-makers; these histories which have been compiled from primitive traditions, and chronicles, and annals, and what not; these books of prophecy which are not the authentic autographs of the prophets, but posthumous collections of such writings (if any) as they left behind them, eked out by the recollections of their disciples; these Proverbs and Psalms which have been handed down by

tradition and altered and edited and re-edited; these histories which contain errors of date and fact, and have been, perhaps, 'idealised' by the reflection of the circumstances and ideas of the writers' own times upon a distant past; these seeming narratives which may be allegories; and these would-be prophecies which may be histories; in what sense can these be said to be *inspired*?" In no sense, to be sure!

New Testament

Turning now to the New Testament, we find its trustworthiness as a historical document impeached so thoroughly by modern Criticism that it would be difficult to find today a single Christian scholar of note who could endorse belief in its divine character. In despair they have to "detach Christianity from mere narrative and seek to appreciate it as a spiritual reality, which appeals to the imagination, the emotions, and the soul". For instance, the celebrated theologian of Germany, Dr. Adolf Harnack, who was Professor of Church History in the University of Berlin and a member of the Royal Prussian Academy, thus sums up his conclusions regarding the New Testament in his well-known work: *What is Christianity?:* "These (three) Gospels are not, it is true, historical works any more than the Fourth; they were not written with the simple object of giving the facts as they were; they were books composed for the work of evangelisation."

For our present purpose it would be best to refer to the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* which is the most comprehensive and authoritative *Christian* work on Biblical problems—higher, textual and historical. It is authoritative because it is the fruit of the earnest labours of those who, as ministers and authorised representatives of the Church[1], are the last persons

1 The names of some of them are : The Rev. Schmiedel, D.D., of Zurich. The Rev. W. C. Van Manen, D.D., Professor of Old Christian Literature and New Testament Exegesis, Leyden. The Rev. E. A. Abbot,

Continued on page 36

to be accused of falsehood or prejudice against Christianity. In fact, as defenders of their faith they must have set out to make the best of a bad bargain.

The views of these scholars concerning the Old Testament are essentially the same as those of Dr. Kirkpatrick cited above. For them, the book of *Genesis* is a composite narrative based on older records long since lost; the stories of the Patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, are legendary; the book of *Exodus* is a composite legend; the character of Moses and the origin of the Ten Commandments is legendary; the book of *Deuteronomy* is a composite and considerably modified version of an older work; the *Psalms* is a composite book of doubtful character; the book of *Job* is not a literary unity but a growth; *Jonah* is a Jewish midrash written after the Exile; *Isaiah* is the work of several authors; the book of *Daniel* is fabulous in character and was written during or after the happening of the events which are foretold therein.

As to the New Testament, the following is a very brief summary of their conclusions[1]:

1 *Encyc. Bib.*, art: "Gospels", Cf: *The Churches and Modern Thought.*

Continued from page 35

D.D., Hulsean Lecturer, Cambridge, Select Preacher, Oxford. The Rev. A. B. Bruce, D. D., Professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow. The Rev. Archibald R. S. Kennedy, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages, Edinburgh. The Rev. C. F. Burney, M. A., Lecturer in Hebrew and Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford. The Rev. George Adam Smith, M.A., D.D., LL.D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow. The Very Rev., J. A. Robinson, D.D., Dean of Westminster. The Rev. Owen Charles Whitehouse, M.A., Principal and Professor and Biblical Exegesis and Theology in the Countess of Huntingdon's College, Cheshunt, Herts. The Rev. Charles, M.A., DD., Professor of Biblical Greek, Trinity College, Dublin. The Rev. S. R. Driver, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. The Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, Oxford, Canon of Rochester. The Rev. T. Witton Davies, B.A., Ph. D., Professor of Old Testament Literature, North Wales Baptist College, Bangor. The Rev. W. H. Bennet, Litt. D., D.D. Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature, Hackney College, London, and Professor of Old Testament Exegesis, New College, London. The Rev. A. B. Davidson, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and New Testament Exegesis, United Free Church, New College, Edinburgh.

The view hitherto current that the four Gospels were compiled by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and appeared thirty or forty years after the death of Jesus, can no longer be maintained. *The four Gospels were compiled from earlier materials which have perished.* Even if we accept more conservative opinions which place the earliest Gospel about 65 A.D., that would not, of course, make any material difference, nor affect the conclusions of criticism as to their *contents. Some of their statements of facts are quite erroneous, and the data are often in direct contradiction to one another. The evangelists made it clear that they wrote with a "lack of concern for historical precision". The imperfection of Gospel accounts is everywhere manifest.* The text must not be taken as a trustworthy guide to his (Jesus') original meaning. It merely shows us what the evangelists or their predecessors believed him to mean. The situations in which the words of Jesus are said to have been spoken cannot be implicitly accepted. *Both St. Matthew and St. Mark seem to have read into the utterances of Jesus details borrowed from subsequent facts or controversies. The historical value of the third Gospel is lowered by evidence of the writer's errors and misunderstandings.* It has been widely assumed that it was written by the physician Luke, and Luke was a companion of Paul. This view of its Pauline character, however, can now be maintained only in a very limited sense. *It is clear that the third Gospel and the Acts are by the same author, but that author was not Luke. In the fourth Gospel we find more ambiguities than in all the other three together.* The records of the miracles in the fourth Gospel are all poetic developments. *It is vain to look to the Church fathers for trustworthy information on the subject of the origin of the Gospels.*

The *Acts of the Apostles* does not come from a companion of St. Paul. It is the work of several hands. No statement merits immediate acceptance on the mere ground of its presence in the book.

According to Professor van Manen, none of the *Epistles* attributed to St. Paul were written by him. Others, however, regard the four generally accepted Epistles as genuine.

The *Book of Revelation* can no longer be regarded as a literary unit, but is an admixture of Jewish with Christian ideas and speculations. Presbyter John, rather than the Apostle, was its author.

There are only nine passages in the Gospels, says the Rev. Dr. Schmiedel, *which "might be called the foundation-pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus"*

It is not possible to know exactly when or where Jesus was born, when he died or how he ministered.

The Rev. Dr. A. B. Bruce regards the Gospel account of Jesus as unreliable in many details. For instance, he shows that: the Temptation is a symbolic representation of a spiritual experience; the story of the crucifixion is not pure truth, but truth mixed with doubtful legend; the night trial, the mocking, the incident of Barabbas, the two thieves, and the preternatural concomitants of the death are picturesque accessories of doubtful authenticity.[1]

According to Dr. Schmiedel, the Gospel accounts, on which the actuality of the Resurrection depends for its establishment, "exhibit contradictions of the most glaring kind." The silence of St. Paul regarding the details of the story of Resurrection proves its untrustworthiness.

Such, in brief, is the historical authenticity and divine authority of the book which the Christian missionaries put foward as the standard of religious revelation and on the basis of which they judge every

1 *Enc. Bib.*, art: "Jesus".

other sacred scripture, particularly the Holy Qur'an. But, if the findings of modern Biblical Criticism are fundamentally true, and it would be difficult to challenge them, the Bible cannot be considered reliable even as an ordinary human historical document, not to speak of attributing to it divine character. And this would mean that to substantiate the Christian claims and to refute the Qur'anic teaching concerning Jesus and Christianity on the strength of Biblical evidence would be altogether absurd.

A former bishop of Manchester once confessed: "The very foundation of our Faith, the very basis of our hopes, are taken from us when one line of that sacred volume, on which we base everything, is declared to be untruthful and untrustworthy." But the Archbishop of Brisbane and many others among the Christian propagandists still declare that the foundations of their faith are intact. Is it obstinacy or hypocrisy?

(B) EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

Historicity of Biblical Jesus

Once, during my sojourn in the Far East, I had a very pleasant discussion with a learned Christian. One of the main problems which we discussed together was: Are we in a position to believe on historical grounds that a person like the Jesus of the Gospels ever existed and that he ever taught the doctrines attributed to him by the Christian Church? Quite naturally the New Testament was first brought forward to bear testimony. But it suffers so miserably in its historical value as a genuine record of the life and work of Jesus that the attempt had to be abandoned soon, and my friend could see no way out of the difficulty except by strengthening the position of the New Testament with the help of the alleged testimony of the Jewish scholar, Flavius Josephus, and some other non-Christian writers. The last position which he thus took up was: Though we cannot prove in the light of scientific criticism that the New Testament is a genuine historical document, the reference to the main events of the life of Jesus in the writings of the historian Flavius Josephus establishes clearly that the basic points in the Christian belief about Jesus are historically well-founded.

This is an argument which I have heard being repeated by many. But the truth is that it is based on nothing else but ignorance and those modern scholars who have made a scientific and impartial study of the subject have come to the conclusion that even the most important testimony, namely

that of Josephus, is an obvious interpolation. The latest and most comprehensive attempt in this connection is that of the brilliant French scholar, Dr. Paul Louis Couchoud, whom I shall quote at length in view of the ignorance which universally prevails. He writes in his *Enigma of Jesus* (pp. 17—22):—

"In the sphere of bare fact Jesus occupies an infinitesimal place. Scientific history does not lay hold on him.

"Forgetting the Christian ages and all that Jesus has come to be in the hearts of believers, let us close our eyes to his dazzling image, and seek the original: what he himself was actually, amidst the realities of his time and country.

"This will involve a precise and strictly limited inquiry. Any honest and practised historian, whether a believer or an unbeliever, is capable of making this investigation by ordinary historical methods. He has only to approach it freely, to treat it frankly, to be concerned with it alone and not with the consequences which he may foresee will result. Such an enquiry need neither be lengthy nor complicated. It consists in the examination and careful sifting of a small amount of evidence, some of which is negative.

"There is one man who might have informed us as to Jesus. He has not done so. This was the Jew, Flavius Josephus, a prolix writer, and well informed as to his compatriots, whom, with equal skill, he betrayed as soldier and served as author. He is the only historian whose works have come down to us, who relates in any detail what happened in Judaea during the last half of the first century. He did not mention Jesus. The misfortune of such an omission soon came to be realised, and Christian

hands added to the text of Josephus what Christians desired it to contain.[1]

"It was left to their discretion. When, after the fall of the Jewish nation, the Jews fell back on their Torah and their Hebrew Mishna, they abandoned all Jewish literature in the Greek language. It was the Christians who preserved in their Bible the charming magic story of Tobias, composed in Greek by some Alexandrian Jew contemporary with Apollonius of Rhodes, and that Wisdom of Solomon, which in its attempt to conciliate Moses and Plato mars both.

"They also preserved certain circumstantial writings, called 'apocalypses'—that is to say, revelations as to the end of the world which was thought to be approaching, pamphlets modelled on the book of Daniel, such as 'The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs', the two books of Enoch, the two apocalypses of Baruch, the fourth Book of Ezra. These they did not fail to enrich with many a Christian addition. Sometimes the addition was more important than the original text. 'The Ascension of Isaiah' is a lengthy sequel to a fragment of Jewish hagiography. The great Apocalypses of John is founded on fragments, still discernible, of a Jewish apocalypse of the Age of Nero (See *L'Apocalypse*, translation of the poem, with Introduction, Paris, edition Bossard, 1922). In such hands Flavius Josephus was not likely to remain intact.

"In two of his works he ought to have, or might have referred to Jesus. First, in the second book of *The Wars of the Jews*, which sets forth in forty-two chapters the notable events that occurred in Judaea between the death of Herod the Great (Year 4 before our era) and the outbreak of the revolt against Rome (Year 66), and more especially the friction between Jews and Romans under the rule of the procurators.

1 The passage about Jesus (*Antiquities*, XVIII, 63 seq.) is an obvious interpolation, recognised as such by the most conservative critics. See M.J. Larange, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, Paris, 1909, p. 19.

"In such a narrative the story of Jesus, as we believe we know it, ought to have occupied an important place. We possess the Greek text of the work, which, according to the author (*Vita* 65), was copied by the Emperor Titus himself and published by imperial order. No mention is made of Jesus. But there once existed a Christian recension, lost to-day and known only through an ancient translation into archaic Russian. In eight places long passages concerning Jesus have been added.[1] They are curious and should be studied side by side with the apocryphal gospels. They are impregnated with Christian theology, and have nothing to do with the story of Josephus.

"In books XVIII, XIX and XX of his *Ancient History of the Jews*, Josephus, according to then recent information, gives a resume of the history of the Judaea of Tiberius down to that of Nero. Here again one expects a word about Jesus. And one's expectation is too well fulfilled. *This time it is the Christian edition alone we possess.* The third chapter of book XVIII relates the affronts suffered by the Jews under Tiberius. Here we find a clumsy interpolation, totally without reference to the context, inserted between the story of the cruelty suffered by Palestine Jews at the hands of Pontius Pilate and the exile of the Roman Jews by order of Tiberius. This is how it occurs. The author is closing his account of cruel suppression of a riot at Jerusalem:—

'*Attacked unarmed by well-equipped assailants, many perished on the spot, others fled wounded. Thus ended the riot.*

'*And about that time there came Jesus, a wise man if he may be called a man. He was a worker of marvels, a teacher of folk who received the truth*

1 They were published by A. Berendts (*Zeugnisse vom Christentum in Slavischen D. B. J. des Josephus*, Liepzig, 1906, and commented upon, among others, by E. Schurer (*Theol. Literature*, 1906, p. 262 seq. and by A. Goethals (*Melanges al' historie du Christianisme*, Brussels and Paris, 1909—1912).

willingly, and he attracted many Jews, many also of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When, on the accusation of those who were the first among us, Pilate had sentenced him to the cross, those who had loved him from the beginning continued to do so. He appeared to them on the third day, restored to life. God's prophets predicted this and ten thousand other marvels concerning him. Even to-day the sect named Christians continues to exist.

'At that time the Jews were struck by another terrible blow.'

"Never was patch-work sewn with more obvious thread. The narrative's natural sequence should take it straight on from the harshly suppressed riot at Jerusalem to the other terrible blow that fell upon the Jews, the banishment to Sardinia of four thousand Jews from Rome. All that refers to Jesus belongs to a quite different order of ideas.

"It is redolent of the most ardent Christian faith couched in typical Christian phraseology.[1] This Jesus, who can hardly be called a man, who is the Messiah in the Christian sense, who rose on the third day according to the scriptures, is the Jesus of faith. And those who seek truth with all their hearts, who, having loved Jesus in the beginning, loved him till the end, are the Christians as they saw themselves. Had Flavius Josephus written this, he would have been a Christian and publicly professed Christianity. His whole work would have been different from what it is. *The interpolation is ingenious and impudent.*

"It was cited in the fourth century by Eusebius of Caesaria (*Ecclesiastical History*, i, 110; *Demonstratis Evangelica*, iii, 5, 105). In the third century Origen conceded that Josephus, though he does not believe in Jesus as the Messiah (*Contra Celsum*, i,

1 See the detailed examination in K. Linck, *De antiquissimis veterum quae ad Jesum Nazarenum spectant testimoniis*, Giessen, 1913, pp. 19—30.

47), sometimes approaches the truth. No earlier apologist appears either to have read or heard of it. He is referring to another interpolation which we do not find in our copies. Evidently he did not find in his the passage in which Josephus is said to confess openly that it is Jesus who was the Messiah, thus contradicting himself; for elsewhere he says that Vespasian was the Messiah (*De bell. jud. VI*, 5, 4).

"In our copies we again find *Jesus called the Messiah* indirectly referred to in book XX Chap. 9. 'Hanan......called a session of the Sandherim, and summoned before it *the brother of Jesus called the Messiah*, named James, and a few others......' Here again a Christian annotation is discernible. The expression *Jesus called the Messiah* is identical with that which, in the Gospel according to Matthew, introduces, Jesus at the end of what is supposed to be his genealogy (*Matt.*, 1, 16). It is unthinkable that Josephus should have used this epithet thus when he has nowhere presented the person to whom this astonishing title may be applied. The expression *brother of Jesus* is merely the traditional title *brother of the Master* by which this James was known to Christians from the time of Paul (*Gal. I*, 19; *I Cor. IX*, 5). By recalling this familiar apellation the annotator wanted to impress on his Christian readers James' identity with the man whom Hanan had sentenced.

"Flavius Josephus says nothing of Jesus. Our best chance of information is lost."

In addition to the testimony of Josephus discussed above, the Christian apologists refer to the writings of Greek and Latin scholars, *i.e.*, Pliny the Younger's *Letter* to Emperor Trajan, the *Annals of Tacitus* and the *Lives of Caesars* by Seutonius. Dr. Couchoud has examined this testimony also in detail and has found it altogether deficient in supplementing our knowledge of Christian history

and doctrines. His concluding words are (p. 28):—

"Pliny the Younger came by chance on the established worship of the Messiah, Tacitus on the most frequently repeated incident of his legend, Seutonius on the trace of the early disorders that raged round his imaginary figure. *This is all that Greek and Latin writers have to tell us about Jesus.*"

Now as to the Jewish religious literature:—

"In Jewish writings," says Dr. Couchoud (pp. 28-30), "in the intricate and incoherent mass of Rabbinical scriptures, one might expect to find some definite tradition as to Jesus. Nothing of the sort. Very few are the allusions to Jesus. No one shows any first-hand knowledge of him[1].

"The Jesus of the Talmud is nothing more than the distorted Jesus of the Gospels. It is a trivial caricature clumsily traced over the Gospel outline. Certain peevish rabbis derided and made a grievance of what the Jews said about Jesus. Their naive sarcasm and credulous inventions dealt mainly with the Virgin Birth, the miracles, and the death sentence......

"As a result of the rabbis' incredible incapacity for chronology, this inverted Gospel oscillates without any definite date between a hundred years before our era and a hundred years after. No definite date was attributed to it until the third century of our era. The most ancient rabbis took care not to know so much. In the beginning of the dialogue that Justin imagines between Rabbi Tryphon and himself in the porch at Ephesus, Tryphon simply says: 'You follow an empty rumour. Yout have fashioned a Messiah for yourselves', (*Dial.* VIII, 4.). Justin, in reply, begins to prove to him the existence of Jesus, the Messiah. He makes no appeal to history, but merely to the psalmist and the prophets, to the ancient holy books."

1 See R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, London, 1904, where references are given.

CONCLUSION

The genuineness of the claims of Christianity can be established on the basis of two types of evidence only, *i.e.*, (1) Internal, and (2) External.

The *Internal evidence*, that is, the one supplied by the Gospels, possesses, if at all, very meagre historical value. In fact, speaking in the light of the science of history, the Gospel texts can in no way be considered as historical documents. They are neither the writings of Jesus nor were they written under his command. Their historical origins are obscure, and human hands have been continuously engaged in introducing into them alterations and interpolations. They are at best 'tendency writings'. As the French theologian, Father Alfred Loisy, truly said: "What is commonly called Gospel history is much less the history of Jesus than a poem of redemption by Christ."[1]

As regards *external evidence*, namely, the one alleged to be found in the writings of Jewish, Roman and Greek historians, the detailed examination by Dr. Couchoud proves it to be forgery and fraud.

1 *Le Style Rythme du Nouveau Testament* ; Journal de Psychologie, no. 5, p. 439.

Indeed both sources of evidence are so hopelessly deficient that many a modern scholar has been led to the conclusion that Jesus never existed. This is the view, for instance, of: P. Wernle (*Die Quellen des Lebens Jesu*, Halle, 1904); A. Loisy (*Jesus et la tradition evangelique*, Paris, 1910, and other works); Ch. Guignebert (*Le Probleme de Jesus*, Paris, 1911); J.M. Robertson (*The Historical Jesus*, London, 1916); A. Drews (*Das Markus—Evangelium als zeugnis gegen die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*, Jena, 1921).[1]

Allowing, however, the widest margin of error and extremist tendencies in such a conclusion, we cannot still deny two important truths: (1) The Bible is not a revealed scripture in any sense whatever; (2) It is absolutely unreliable as a record of the life and teachings of Jesus[2].

This means that we should not look for the source of Christianity in the divine revelation granted to the holy prophet Jesus of Nazareth, but somewhere else. Where?—The next chapter shall furnish the reply.

1 Among those who do not go so far as to deny the historicity of Jesus is Renan, author of the famous *Vie de Jesus*. But even he admits that "only with great difficulty can one arrive at so much as *one page of history* about the actual personage who was called Jesus". (*La Liberte de Penser*, quoted by P. Larroque : *Opinion des Deistes Rationalistes sur la Vie de Jesus selon M. Renan.*, p. 24).

2 For fuller information refer to : A. Drews : *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition*, Göttingen, 1911 ; V. H. Stanton : *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Cambridge, 1903, 1909, 1911; B. W. Bacon : *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*, London, 1910, and *Jesus and Paul*, London, 1921.

III

PAGAN FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

A CHRISTIAN CONFESSION

A clergyman of the Church of England once confessed in the *Church Times*[1]:—

"The study of folk-lore, of anthropology, of primitive myth and ritual, has made enormous strides within the last quarter of a century, and the fruits of that study are now forced, for the first time, upon the attention of the general public. Presented in outline, the situation is as follows: We have been accustomed to consider Christianity apart from all other religions......That there could be any but the vaguest likeness between them and our own beliefs was unimaginable. Possibly there was a belief in the Fatherhood of some supreme being, some vague conception of a future life; while sacrificial rites, as we knew, were not peculiar to the Jews. But the other doctrines of our creed we regarded as exclusively our own. The ideas of a Triune Godhead, of an Incarnate Saviour, of the Virgin Birth, of the Second Advent, of the Sacraments, of the Communion of Saints—these seemed to be the distinctive possessions of Christianity; these were marks clearly dividing it from any form of paganism. So, at least, we imagined. But it proves that we were completely mistaken. The modern

1 Quoted by V. Phelips in *The Churches and Modern Thought*, pp. 84, 85.

study of primitive religions shows that every one of these beliefs is, or has been, held in some part or other of the pagan world quite independently of Christian influence, and that, while we are bound to speak of these beliefs as, in a sense, distinctively Christian, to term them exclusively Christian is no longer possible."

'To term them exclusively Christian is no longer possible'—these words must have been written with a heavy heart and a trembling hand. But the clergyman in question should not have stopped at that. It was his duty, and it is the duty of every Christian, including Archbishop Wand, to state the ground of resemblance between Christianity and Paganism.

For my part, I regard it most unfortunate that the religion which is being preached under the sacred name of Jesus (God bless him!), whose very mission was to destroy paganism and idolatry, should present to-day such absolute resemblance to the Pagan creeds of his own day. I regard it most unfortunate because a scientific study of the problem convinces me that the resemblance cannot be accounted for except on the basis of the fact that the Christian Church in its early days borrowed Pagan ideology and rituals wholesale and threw off the message of Jesus. And in this I am supported not by one or two but by a large number of those eminent European scholars who have devoted their whole lives to the study of Christianity in the light of Comparative Religion, as for instance, Sir J. G. Frazer (*The Golden Bough*), J. M. Robertson (*Christianity and Mythology*, *Pagan Christs*, etc.), Dupuis (*The Origin of All Religious Worship*), Knight (*The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*), Edward Carpenter (*Pagan and Christian Creeds*), T. W. Doane (*The Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*).

I intend to take up this problem and treat it at some length in this chapter, because it forms one of

the fundamental points of controversy between Islam and Christianity. The Christian believes that Christianity originated in the divine revelation granted to Jesus; the Qur'an contends that the message which Jesus gave to the world has been lost and that Christianity in its present form is but a survival of the Pagan ideologies of the Roman Empire. Which of the two contentions is true can be decided only by an unprejudiced examination of the relevant facts unearthed by modern research.

THE CULT OF SUN-WORSHIP

Worship of the sun has formed a most popular type of religion for the backward races of mankind. This grand and majestic luminary appears to a nascent, half-cultured mind as the Source of Life and the Lord of Light, and the various phases through which it has to pass provide him occasions for giving expression to his inborn instincts of fear and hope and for celebrating festivals accordingly.

The sun begins to decline after the autumnal equinox, and its decline reaches the last stage at the approach of the winter solstice, after which it again begins to increase in its light and warmth and ascends the horizon as if re-born in the underworld. This progress continues till the vernal equinox approaches, when days become of equal length with nights, and the progress seems to be impeded. But the 'crisis' is soon overcome; days become longer than nights—a final victory of the 'Lord of Light' over the 'Prince of Darkness'.

Thus among all sun-worshipping communities, the autumnal equinox became an occasion for the expression of fear and grief, more especially fear, because of the belief that their deity had fallen into the clutches of the demon of darkness. On the other hand, the winter solstice and the vernal equinox—the corresponding festivals in Christendom are Christmas and Easter—became the days of great rejoicings and festivities; the first being the day of the 'birth' of the sun-god and the second the day of his 'triumph' over the 'Prince of Darkness'.

LEGENDS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SUN-GODS

Sun-worship was, at the time of the appearance of Jesus, the universally prevalent religion of the Roman Empire, though the names given to the sun-god in different countries were different. The well-known sun-gods, whose worship had been popular in the Mediterranean countries at one time or the other, are: Attis of Phrygia, Adonis of Syria, Dionysius or Bacchus of Greece, Bel of Babylon, Osiris and Horus of Egypt, Mithras or Mithra of Persia. Brief sketches of the legends of these sun-gods will reveal the sources of the Christian legend.

Attis[1]

He was born of a virgin named Nana and was regarded as the "Only Begotten Son" and "Saviour". He was bled to death on March 24th at the foot of a pine-tree and his votaries believed that his blood had renewed the fertility of the earth, and thus brought a new life to humanity. He, however, rose from the dead, and his resurrection along with his death was celebrated by his votaries. Every year on the 24th day of March, they would first fasten his image to a pine-tree and then lay it in a tomb with wailing and mourning. On the next day they would find the tomb empty and celebrate the resurrection with great rejoicing. Sacramental meal and baptism of blood were special features of his Church.

1 Some scholars place him in the category of the vegetation-gods, but I prefer to regard him as a sun-god.

Adonis or Tammuz[1]

He was the virgin-born "Saviour" of Syria. He suffered death for the redemption of mankind, but rose again in the spring. His resurrection was commemorated by a great annual festival. The Old Testament refers to the weeping and wailing of women over his idol (*Ezekiel*, viii, 14). The Rev. Sir G.W. Cox[2] calls him the crucified Tao (divine love personified), and the Rev. Dr. Parkhust, in his *Hebrew Lexicon*, remarks: "I find myself obliged to refer Tammuz to that class of idols which were originally designed to represent the promised Saviour,[3] the desire of all nations."

Dionysius or Bacchus

He was the "Only Begotten Son" of Jupiter and was born of a virgin named Demeter (or Semele) on December 25th. He was a Redeemer, Liberator and Saviour. "It is I," so says Bacchus to mankind, "who guide you: it is I who protect you, and who save you: I am Alpha and Omega."[4] Wine had an important place in the festivals of his cult. He was slain for redeeming humanity and was called "The Slain One," "The Sin-Bearer," "The Redeemer." His passion play was celebrated every year representing his death, descent into hell and resurrection.[5]

Bel or Baal

He was the sun-god of Babylon and the story of his life is extremely astonishing in so far as his passion play has a very close resemblance with the Christian passion story even in details. The Jews had

1 For details see Sir J. G. Frazer's *Adonis* in the Thinkers' Library Series.

2 *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, Vol. II, p. 113.

3 *i.e.*, Jesus.

4 Godfrey Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, Vol. I, p. 322.

5 *Cf:* Dupuis: *The Origin of all Religious Worship*: Knight: *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*.

passed a long time in captivity in Babylon, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and this accounts for the close resemblance. More of it later.

Osiris

He was born on December 29th, of a virgin called by the Egyptians the 'Virgin of the World". He preached the gospel of gentleness and peace. Wine and corn were regarded as his celebrated discoveries. He was betrayed by Typhen, slain and dismembered. He was interred, but came again to life after remaining in hell for two or three days and three nights. After his death, it was the custom of his votaries to keep his image in a box and bring out the image at the time of worship with the cries "Osiris is risen!"

"The sufferings and death of Osiris," says Rawlinson,[1] "were the great mystery of the Egyptian religion. His being the divine goodness, and the abstract idea of "good", his manifestation upon earth (like an Indian god), his death and resurrection, and his office as judge of the dead in a future life, look like the *early revelation of a future manifestation of the deity*[2] converted into a mythological fable."

"Belief in the god-man in the form of Osiris became the chief element in Egyptian religion, and remained for thousands of years the faith of the people through the tangled skein of religious life in Egypt until Osiris passed into the form of the god-man Jesus Christ."[3]

Mithras or Mithra[4]

He was the virgin-born sun-god of the Persians, the perfect prototype of Jesus Christ and the founder

1 *Herodotus*, Vol. II, p. 260, note 3.

2 *i.e.*, the alleged incarnation of God in Jesus.

3 Sir Richard Gregory, *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 54.

4 For detailed study see Prof. Franz Cumont's *Les Mysteres de Mithra*.

of an international Church in which Christmas ond Easter were two most important festivals. "This divine saviour came into the world as an infant. His first worshippers were shepherds: and the day of his nativity was December 25th. His followers preached a severe and rigid morality, chief among their virtues being temperance, chastity, renunciation and self-control. They kept the seventh day holy, and the middle day of each month was a special feast of Mithra, which symbolised his function of Mediator. They had seven sacraments of which the most important were baptism, confirmation, and Eucharistic supper, at which the communicants partook of the divine nature of Mithra under the species of bread and wine."[1]

1 *The Nineteenth Century*, Sept. 1905, p. 496.

AMERICAN AND INDIAN MAN-GODS

It was not in the Mediterranean countries alone that the closely-resembling legends of sun-gods formed the main background of popular religion. The physical phenomena connected with the sun being universal, their mystical interpretation in the form of sun-myths was also universal. This fact is amply borne out by reference to American and Indian man-gods, who, though they may not have been worshipped solely as sun-gods, nevertheless bear such a striking resemblance to the solar deities mentioned above that they must be placed in the same category.

The Legend of Quetzalcoatl

Quetzalcoatl was the virgin-born "Saviour" of ancient Mexico. A heavenly messenger announced his supernatural birth to his mother, the *virgin* Sochiquetzal, known in Mexican mythology as the "Queen of Heaven". Quetzalcoatl laboured for the redemption of humanity and died "upon the *cross*" as "an *atonement* for the sins of mankind".[1] "The *temptation* of Quetzalcoatl (*on a mountain*) and the *fast of forty days*......are very curious and mysterious."[2] "The Spaniards were surprised to see the Mexicans keep the vernal forty days' fast"[3] in memory of their saviour's fast. According to the author of *The Golden Bough*, the Mexicans believed in the resurrection of the man-god.

1 Lord Kingsborough: *Mexican Antiquities*, Vol. VI, p. 95.

2 Lord Kingsborough: *Mexican Antiquities*, Vol. VI, pp. 197—200.

3 Bonwick: *Egyptian, Belief*, p. 370.

The Christian rite of *mystically eating the body of their saviour* "was performed by the Mexicans, not only literally, but in the symbolic way also; and they connected their *sacraments* with the *symbol of the cross.*"

Asceticism and meekness were the keynotes in the teaching of Quetzalcoatl. "If asceticism be virtue, they (*i.e.*, the Mexicans) cultivated virtue zealously......nowhere could men win a higher reputation for sanctity by living in celibacy. Their saints were numerous. They had nearly all the formulas of Christian morality, so-called. The priests themselves mostly lived in celibacy; and they educated children with the greatest vigilance in their temple-schools and higher colleges. They taught the people to be peaceful, to bear injuries with meekness, to rely on God's mercy and not on their own merits; they taught, like Jesus and the Pagans, that adultery could be committed by the eyes and the heart; and, above all, they exhorted men to feed the poor. The public hospitals were carefully attended to, at a time when Christian countries had none. They had the *practice of confession and absolution*, and in the regular exhortation of confessor there was this formula: Clothe the naked and feed the hungry, whatever privations it may cost thee: for remember their flesh is like thine, and they are men like thee; cherish the sick, for they are the image of God." "When," says J.M. Robertson, "we go to the records of the cultures and creeds of Mexico and Peru, records wonderfully preserved in the teeth of the fanaticism which would have destroyed them all if it could, we stand clear of the frauds and prejudices alike of Jew and Christian."[1]

1 *Pagan Christs*, p. 372.

The Krishna Myth

The author of *The Churches and Modern Thought* has given (on pp. 86, 87) a summary of the Krishna myth based on the researches of several great scholars of Mythology like Sir J. G. Frazer (*The Golden Bough*), J. M. Robertson (*Christianity and Mythology; Pagan Christs*), Mons. Guigniant (*Religion de l'Antiquite*), Max Muller (*Introduction to the Science of Religion*), G. Higgins (*Anacalypsis*), the Rev. Sir G. W. Cox (*Aryan Mythology*), Sir Monier Williams (*Hinduism, Indian Wisdom*) etc. According to these researches, "Krishna was a miraculous incarnation of Vishnu in the womb of Devaki. A chorus of angels exclaimed: 'In the delivery of this favoured woman, nature shall have cause to exult.' The birth was indicated in the heavens by a star. On the morning of his birth the spirits of heaven danced and sang, and the clouds emitted low, pleasing sounds. Though royally descended he was actually born in a cave. The divine child was recognised and adored by cowherds. He was presented with gifts of sandalwood and perfumes. The holy Indian prophet, Nared, paid him a visit, consulted the stars and declared him to be of celestial descent. His birth was beset by peril, and his fosterfather was warned by a heavenly voice to fly with the child, as the reigning monarch, King Kansa, might take his life.

The King ordered the massacre in all his states of all the male children born during the night of the birth of Krishna. One of the first miracles performed by Krishna, when mature, was the curing of a leper. A lame woman came with a vessel filled with spices and sweet oil and annointed his head. Krishna was slain. At his death a black circle surrounded the moon and the sun was darkened at noonday. Spirits were to be seen on all sides. Krishna descended into hell,

rose again from the dead, and ascended bodily into heaven, many persons witnessing his ascent. He is to come again on earth in the latter days. He will appear as an armed warrior riding a white horse. At his approach the sun and moon will be darkened, the earth will tremble and the stars fall from the firmament. (Compare Rev. vi. 2, 12, 13). He is to judge the dead at the last day. Krishna is the creator of all things visible and invisible, and is the beginning, middle and end of all things. Krishna was transfigured before his beloved disciple, Arjuna. Krishna was the meekest of beings. He preached sublimely. According to the purer Vaishnava faith, he was pure and chaste in reality; any amorousness related of him is to be explained allegorically, as symbolising the longing of the human soul for the Supreme; just as the amorous 'Song of Solomon' is said to be allegorical, and to mean 'Christ's love for His Church.' Krishna even condescended to wash the feet of the Brahmins. He is the incarnation of Vishnu, the second person in the Hindu Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; and Vishnu in his incarnations is a saviour, protector, and friend. Krishna said: 'Let a man, if seeking God by deep abstraction, abandon his possessions and his hopes, betake himself to some secluded spot, and fix his heart and thoughts on God alone.' And, again: 'Then be not sorrowful; from all thy sins I will deliver thee.' Many other such remarkable passages might be adduced from the Bhagvadgita. Justice, humanity, good faith, compassion, disinterestedness—in fact, all the virtues—are said to have been taught by Krishna both by precept and example; but we must remember, as Monier Williams informs us in his *Hinduism*, that Krishna, in the ancient epic poems, is simply a great hero, and it is not until about the fourth century B.C. that he is deified and declared to be an incarnation of Vishnu. In conclusion, the accounts of Krishna's childhood agree very closely with the apocryphal accounts of Christ's childhood."

The Legend of Buddha

The life-story of the mythical Buddha is nearly the same as that of Krishna. I omit to give it here as it has been given in full detail in the section on "*Buddha and Jesus.*"

Summarising the foregoing account of the Pagan deities, especially the Mediterranean and Mexican sun-gods, we find the following fundamental points of resemblance between their lives and the life of Jesus:—

1. They were born on or very near December 25th;
2. They were born in a cave or underground chamber;
3. They were born miraculously of a Virgin Mother;
4. They led a life of toil for mankind;
5. They were called by the names of Light Bringer, Healer, Mediator, Saviour and Deliverer:
6. They were vanquished by the Powers of Darkness;
7. They descended into Hell or the underworld;
8. They rose again from the dead, and became the pioneers of mankind to the Heavenly World;
9. They founded Communions of Saints and Churches, to which disciples were received by baptism;
10. Their lives were commemorated by Eucharistic feasts.

The story, however, does not end here. Modern scholars have unearthed a vast mass of evidence which proves beyond doubt that not only the life of the Christian Jesus but the whole superstructure of Christianity as such has been built up on Pagan foundations. In fact, Christianity, as it has existed since the transformation wrought by the neo-Platonist Paul, is simply a continuation of pre-Christian Paganism. Its introduction in the world marked no spiritual revolution but a mere change of labels brought about under the stress of political complications. Its very success against the other Pagan Churches was due not to anything new in its dogma or its promise. It succeeded, firstly, because its leaders could transform it into a Pagan cult with certain slight modifications suited to meet the needs of the times, and, secondly, because they could play with the politics of the Roman Empire with greater success than their Pagan rivals. The evidence on this score is unimpeachable. A Liberal Christian, Mr. J. A. Farrer writes[1]: "If, then, between the higher Paganism and higher Christianity there was so little difference, how, it may be asked, did Catholicism come to assert itself at all, to say nothing of its rapid and easy conquest of the forces of Philosophy arrayed against it. The answer, forced upon us by so much as is still extant of its apocalyptic literature, is: Because it coincided and co-operated with a long-smouldering political movement against the Roman Empire—a movement which, unhappily for the world too well succeeded, involving, as it did, in the ruin of Rome, the ruin of civilisation, of order, of peace, of prosperity, and, above all, of sound and simple theological ideas based on healthy reason and common sense."

A further elucidation of the Pagan foundations of Christianity may now be attempted.

1 *Paganism and Christianity*, p. 91.

Argument from the Babylonian Legend—Passion Stories of Bel and Jesus—Cult of the Essenes

It is evident from the foregoing that Jesus delivered his message—which Muslims believe was the simple message of right thinking and pure living—to a world saturated with the ideas of sun-worshippers. Even among his own community, the Jews, there was a monastic brotherhood, known as Essenes, who had established themselves not far away from Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Bishop Lightfoot maintains that they were sun-worshippers, and, according to the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, they had combined with their Jewish heritage the "Persian and Babylonian influences". According to Bunsen, they were responsible for introducing the new doctrine of Angel Messiah and Atonement into Judaism and Christianity. It seems that their brotherhood accepted Jesus as the Messiah and thus laid the first foundations of the paganisation of his simple faith.[1]

The orthodox Jews—the fishermen of Galilee—who accepted Jesus without prejudice and tried to follow him in the true spirit of his teaching do not seem to have wielded much influence, and their school ultimately died out. Their sole weakness probably was that they were too simple-minded and could not therefore survive the machinations and

1 *Angel Messiah*, p. 158.

wire-pulling of their rivals. As George Bernard Shaw remarks: "Jesus could be reproached for having chosen his disciples very unwisely if we could believe that he had any real choice. There are moments when one is tempted to say that there was not one Christian among them and that Judas was the only one who showed any gleams of common sense."[1]

Modern archaeological researches have brought to light some very bewildering facts which go to prove that Babylonian mythology played an important role in the early stages of Christianity. In 1903-4, the German excavators at Kala Shergat (the site of ancient Assur) discovered two cuneiform documents. When deciphered, they were found to contain the narrative of the Passion Play of Bel. An English journal[2] published its translation along with the story of the Christian Passion Play. I reproduce it below:

The Babylonian Passion Play	*The Christian Passion Play*
1. Bel is taken prisoner.	1. Jesus is taken prisoner.
2. Bel is tried in the House on the Mount (the Hall of Justice).	2. Jesus is tried in the House of the High Priest and the Hall of Pilate.
3. Bel is smitten (wounded).	3. Jesus is scourged.
4. Bel is led away to the Mount.	4. Jesus is led away to crucifixion in Golgotha.

1 *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Her Search for God*, p. 72.

2 *The Quest*, London Jan. 1922.

The Babylonian Passion Play	*The Christian Passion Play*
5. Together with Bel a malefactor is led away and put to death. Another, who is also charged as a malefactor, is let go, thus not taken away with Bel.	5. Together with Jesus two malefactors are led away and put to death. Another (Barabbas) is released to the people, and thus not taken away with Jesus.
6. After Bel had gone to the Mount, the city breaks out into tumult, and fighting takes place in it.	6. At the death of Jesus the veil in the temple is rent (*Synopt.*), the rocks are rent asunder, the graves are opened and the dead come forth into the holy city. (*Matt.*)
7. Bel's clothes are carried away.	7. Jesus' robe is divided among the soldiers. (*Synopt., John Cp. Ps. XXII*, 18).
8. A woman wipes away the heart's blood of Bel flowing from a drawn-out weapon (? spear).	8. The lance-thrust in Jesus' side and outflow of water and blood (*John*). Mary Magdalene and two other women busy themselves with the (washing and) embalming of the body. (*Mark, Luke*).
9. Bel goes down into the Mount away from sun and light, disappears from life, and is held fast in the Mount as in a prison.	9. Jesus, in the grave, in the rock tomb (*Synopt.*), goes down into the realm of the dead (1 *Pet. III, XII*, 40; *Acts. II*, 24; *Rom.* X, 17: "descent into hell" dogma).

The Babylonian Passion Play	*The Christian Passion Play*
10. Guards watch Bel imprisoned in the stronghold of the Mount.	10. Guards are set over the tomb of Jesus (*Matt.*).
11. A goddess sits with Bel; she comes to tend him.	11. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sit before the tomb. (*Matt., Mark*).
12. They seek for Bel where he is held fast. In particular a weeping woman seeks for him at the "Gate of Burial". When he is being carried away, the same lamented: "O, my brother! O, my brother!"	12. Women, in particular Mary and Magdalene, come to the tomb to seek Jesus where he is behind the door of the tomb. Mary stands weeping before the empty tomb because they have taken her Lord away (*John*).
13. Bel is again brought back to life (as the sun of spring); he comes again out of the Mount.	13. Jesus' restoration to life, his rising from the grave (on a Sunday morning).
14. His chief feast, the Babylonian New Year's festival in March at the spring equinox, is celebrated also as his triumph over the powers of darkness. (*Cf.*, the creation hymn: "Once when on high" as the New Year's festival hymn).	14. His festival approximately at the spring equinox is also celebrated as his triumph over the powers of darkness (*Cf.*, *e.g.*, *Col. II*, 15).

Argument from Egyptian Mythology: Cults of Isis and Osiris

An eminent English Egyptologist has traced the influence of Egyptian mythology on Christianity. He says[1]: "The knowledge of the ancient Egyptian religion which we now possess fully justifies the assertion that the rapid growth and progress of Christianity in Egypt were due mainly to the fact that the new religion, which was preached there by St. Mark and his immediate followers, *in all its essentials* so closely resembled that which was the outcome of Osiris, Isis and Horus that popular opposition was entirely disarmed." "In the apocryphal literature of the first six centuries which followed the evangelisation of Egypt, several of the legends about Isis and her sorrowful wanderings were made to centre round the mother of Christ." "The Egyptians who embraced Christianity found that the *moral system* of the old cult and that of the new religion were so similar, and the promises of resurrection and immortality in each so alike, that they transferred their allegiance from Osiris to Jesus of Nazareth without difficulty. Moreover, Isis and the child Horus were straightway identified with Mary the virgin and her son."

Argument from Mithraism

"Mithraism," says Robertson[2], "was in point of range the most nearly universal religion of the Western world in the early centuries of the Christian era. As to this students are agreed. To the early Fathers, we shall see, Mithraism was a most serious thorn in the flesh; and the monumental remains of the Roman period, in almost all parts of the empire, show its extraordinary extension......There were

1 Sir Wallis Budge: *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. I, Preface, p. XV.

2 *Pagan Christs*, Part III.

in antiquity, we know from Porphyry, several elaborate treatises setting forth the religion of Mithra; and every one of these has been destroyed by the care of the Church......Of course, we are told that the Mithraic rites and mysteries are borrowed and imitated from Christianity. The refutation of this notion, as has been pointed out by M. Havet, lies in the language of those Christian fathers who spoke of Mithraism. Three of them speak of the Mithraic resemblances to Christian rites as being the work of devils. Now, if the Mithraists *had* simply imitated the historic Christians, the obvious course for the latter would be simply to say so......The Mithraic mysteries, then, of the burial and resurrection of the Lord, the Mediator, the Saviour; burial in a rock-tomb and resurrection from the tomb; the sacrament of bread and water, the marking on the forehead with a mystic mark—all these were in practice before the publication of the Christian Gospel......Nor was this all. Firmicus informs us that the devil in order to leave nothing undone for the destruction of souls, had beforehand resorted to deceptive imitations of the *Cross* of Christ...... Still further does the parallel hold. It is well-known that, whereas in the Gospels Jesus is said to have been born in an inn-stable, early Christian writers, such as Justin Martyr and Origen, explicitly say he was born in a cave. Now, in the Mithra myth, Mithra is both rock-born and born in a cave; and the monuments show the new-born babe adored by shepherds who offer first-fruits......Now, however arises the great question: How came such a cultus to die out of the Roman and Byzantine Empire after making its way so far, and holding its ground so long? The answer to that question has never, I think been fully given, and is for the most part utterly evaded, though part of it has been suggested often enough. The truth is Mithraism was not overthrown; it was merely transformed......Though Mithraism had many attractions, Christianity had more, having sedulously copied every one of its

rivals and developed special features of its own...... In the Christian legend the God was humanised in the most literal way; and for the multitude the concrete deity must needs replace the abstract. The Gospels gave a literal story: The Divine man was a carpenter, and ate and drank with the poorest of the poor....Gradually the very idea of allegory died out of the Christian intelligence; and priests as well as people came to take everything literally and concretely......This was the religion for the Dark Ages...... Byzantines and barbarians alike were held by literalism, not by the unintelligible: for both alike the symbol had to become a fetish; and for the Dark Ages the symbol of the cross was much more plausibly appealing than that of the god slaying the zodiacal bull......A Mithraist could turn to the Christian worship and find his main rites unimpaired, lightened only of the burden of initiative austerities, stripped of the old obscure mysticism, and with all things turned to the literal and the concrete, in sympathy with the waning of knowledge and philosophy throughout the world."

Lest the view of Robertson be taken as biased, I will quote two great Christian theologians, Adolf Harnack and Connyblare. Writing on "Manichaeism" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, they say: "Towards the close of the third century two great religions stood opposed to one another in western Europe, one wholly Iranian, namely Mithraism, the other of Jewish origin but not without Iranian elements, part and parcel probably of Judaism which gave it birth, namely Christianity. Mithraism was peculiarly the religion of Roman garrisons and was carried by the legionaries wherever they went, and soldiers may have espoused it rather than the rival faith, because in primitive age Christian discipline denied them the sacraments on the ground that they were professional shedders of blood. Although in its austerity and inculcation of self-restraint, courage and honesty, Mithraism suited the Roman soldiers,

its cumbrous mythology and cosmogony at last weakened its hold on men's minds and it disappeared in the fourth century before a victorious Catholicism. Yet it did not do so until another faith equally Iranian in mythology and cosmological belief had taken its place."

Argument from Buddhism

Several eminent Christian scholars have traced the influence of Buddhism on Christianity. One of them, Mr. S. M. Melamed, has stated the argument briefly thus[1]: "A half century ago, Rudolph Seydel, the great German historian of religion, published a book in which he clearly demonstrated that all the tales, miracles, similes and proverbs of the Christian gospel have their counterparts in the Buddhistic gospel. He compared the original texts and sources of both gospels, and without drawing any conclusions he demonstrated the remarkable analogies and parallels between the two......

"It has been urged that these similarities, analogies and parallels are merely chance coincidences, which do not prove a direct Buddhist influence upon Christianity. Yet the fact remains that Buddhistic canons were already known to the Western world before the coming of Jesus. Today hardly any Indologist of note denies the organic connection between the two redemptive religions. So close is the connection between them that even the details of the miracles recorded by Buddhism and Christianity are the same. Of Buddha, too, it was told that he fed five hundred men with one loaf of bread, that he cured lepers and caused the blind to see.

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1 *Spinoza and Buddha: Visions of a Dead God* (University of Chicago Publication). Besides this, there are several other important books having a bearing on the subject, *e. g.*, Beal: *The Romantic History of Buddha* and *Buddhist Literature* ; Max Muller : *Introduction to the Science of Religion* ; Forlong : *Short Studies of the Science of Comparative Religion* ; Senart : *La Legende du Buddha* ; R. Seydel ; *Evangelium von Jesu* and *Buddha Legends* : Pfliederer: *Urchristentum*; Bunsen: *Angel Messiah*.

"Long before the death of Clemens of Alexandria, who mentions Buddha by name in 220 B.C., the Buddhistic doctrines and legends were known to the scholars of the Western world. In the light of these facts it is preposterous to assume that the poets of the New Testament originated their own folklore. Long before the coming of Jesus, Buddhist doctrines had made heavy inroads in the Western World. Innumerable sects, preaching some form of Buddhism, made their appearance in the century preceding the birth of Jesus.

"Rudolph Seydel, a man of the deepest Christian piety and theological conservatism, states that it is not permissible to admit an independent origin of the parables, legends, similes and proverbs of Christianity and Buddhism. Inasmuch as Buddhism precedes Christianity by some five hundred years, one cannot escape the assumption that the newer religion was inspired by the older. The principal canon of Buddhism, called the Pali canon, was fixed eighty years before Christ. No Christian scholar of note has asserted that the synoptic Gospels influenced Buddhism, but numerous scholars long ago discovered Buddhistic elements in the Gospel of John and also recognised the Buddhistic background of Essenism, by which Jesus was greatly influenced. The conclusion is inescapable that Palestine, together with many other parts of Asia Minor, was inundated by Buddhistic propaganda for two centuries before Christ. The world in which Jesus lived was Buddhistic territory in the spiritual meaning of the term, and not Hebraic or Judaic. Hence Christianity, including the personality of its founder, is not an off-shoot of Hebraic religiosity but of Buddhistic theology. Only this phenomenon explains the gigantic struggles within the young Christian Church, and the various schismatic tendencies, sects and controversies in the first five hundred years of its existence."

Buddha and Jesus

In his *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, T.W. Doane has shown in detail (on pp. 287-97) that, with the exception of the death of Jesus on the cross and the doctrine of vicarious atonement, the lives and doctrines of Buddha and Jesus correspond and coincide with each other entirely. This correspondence is fully borne out by the following comparison:—

1. Buddha was born of the Virgin Maya, who conceived him without carnal intercourse.	1. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, who conceived him without carnal intercourse.
2. The incarnation of Buddha is recorded to have been brought about by the descent of the divine power called "Holy Ghost", upon the Virgin Maya.	2. The incarnation of Jesus is recorded to have been brought about by the descent of the divine power called the "Holy Ghost", upon the Virgin Mary.
3. When Buddha descended from the regions of the souls and entered the body of the Virgin Maya, her womb assumed the appearance of clear transparent crystal, in which Buddha appeared beautiful as a flower.	3. When Jesus descended from his heavenly seat, and entered the body of the Virgin Mary her womb assumed the appearance of clear transparent crystal, in which Jesus appeared beautiful as a flower.

4. The birth of Buddha was announced in the heavens by an asterism which was seen rising on the horizon. It is called the "Messianic Star."	4. The birth of Jesus was announced in the heavens by "his star", which was seen rising on the horizon. It might properly be called the "Messianic Star."
5. The son of the Virgin Maya, on whom according to the tradition, the "Holy Ghost" had descended, was said to have been born on Christmas day.	5. The son of the Virgin Mary, on whom, according to the tradition, the "Holy Ghost" had descended, was said to have been born on Christmas day.
6. Demonstrations of celestial delight were manifest at the birth of Buddha. The Devas in heaven and earth sang praises to the "Blessed One", and said: "Today, Bodhisatwa is born on earth, to give joy and peace to men and Devas, to shed light in the dark places, and to give sight to the blind."	6. Demonstrations of celestial delight were manifest at the birth of Jesus. The angels in heaven and earth sang praises to the "Blessed One", saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men."
7. Buddha was visited by men who recognized in this marvellous infant all the characters of the divinity, and he had scarcely seen the day before he was hailed God of Gods.	7. Jesus was visited by wise men who recognized in this marvellous infant all the characters of the divinity, and he had scarcely seen the day before he was hailed God of Gods.

8. The infant Buddha was presented with "costly jewels and precious substances."	8. The infant Jesus was presented with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.
9. When Buddha was an infant, just born, he spoke to his mother, and said: "I am the greatest among men."	9. When Jesus was an infant in his cradle, he spoke to his mother, and said: "I am Jesus , the Son of God."
10. Buddha was a "dangerous child". His life was threatened by King Bimbasara, who was advised to destroy the child, as he was liable to overthrow him.	10. Jesus was a "dangerous child". His life was threatened by King Herod, who attempted to destroy child, as he was liable to overthrow him.
11. When sent to school, the young Buddha surprised his master. Without having ever studied, he completely worsted all his competitors, not only in writing, but in arithmetic, metaphysics, astrology, geometry, etc.	11. When sent to school, Jesus surprised his master, Zaccheus, who, turning to Joseph, said: "Thou hast brought a boy to me to be taught, who is more learned than any master."
12. When twelve years old, the child Buddha is presented in the temple. He explains and asks learned questions; he excels all those who enter into competition with	12. "And when he was twelve years old, they brought him to (the temple at) Jerusalem ...... While in the temple among the doctors and elders, and learned men of

him.

of Israel, he proposed several questions of learning and also gave them answers."

13. Buddha entered a temple, on which occasion forthwith all the statues rose and threw themselves at his feet, in act of worship.

13. "And as Jesus was going in by the ensigns, who carried the standard, the tops of them bowed down and worshipped Jesus."

14. The ancestry of Gautama Buddha is traced from his father, Sodhodana, through various individuals and races, all of royal dignity, to Maha-Sammata, the first monarch of the world. Several of the names and some of the events are met with in the Puranas of the Brahmins, but it is not possible to reconcile one order of statement with the other; and it would appear that the Buddhist historians have introduced races and invented names, that they may invest their venerated Sage with all the honours of heraldry, in addition to the attributes of divinity.

14 The ancestry of Jesus is traced from his father, Joseph, through various individuals, nearly all of whom were of royal dignity, to Adam, the first monarch of the world. Several of the names, and some of the events, are met with in the sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews, but it is not possible to reconcile one order of statement with the other; and it would appear that Christian historians have invented and introduced names that they may invest their venerated Sage with all the honours of heraldry, in addition to the attributes of divinity.

15. When Buddha was about to go forth "to adopt a religious life", Mara appeared before him, to tempt him.	15. When Jesus was about "beginning to preach", the devil appeared before him, to tempt him.
16. Mara said unto Buddha: "Go not forth to adopt a religious life, and in seven days thou shalt become an emperor of the world."	16. The devil said to Jesus: "If thou wilt fall down and worship me, I will give thee all the kingdoms of the world."
17. Buddha would not heed the words of the Evil One, and said to him: "Get thee away from me."	17. Jesus would not heed the words of the Evil One and said to him: "Get thee behind me, Satan."
18. After Mara had left Buddha, "the skies rained flowers, and delicious odours pervaded the air."	18. After the devil had left Jesus, "angels came and ministered unto him."
19. Buddha fasted for a long period.	19. Jesus fasted forty days and nights.
20. Buddha, the Saviour, was baptized, and at this recorded water-baptism the Spirit of God was present; that is, not only the highest God, but also the "Holy Ghost", through whom the incarnation of Gautama Buddha is re-	20. Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, at which time the spirit of God was present; that is, not only the highest God but also the "Holy Ghost", through whom the incarnation of Jesus is recorded to have been brought

corded to have been brought about by the descent of that Divine power upon the Virgin Maya.

about by the descent of that Divine power upon the Virgin Mary.

21. On one occasion towards the end of his life on earth, Gautama Buddha is reported to have been transfigured. When on a mountain in Ceylon, suddenly a flame of light descended upon him and encircled the crown of his head with a circle of light. The mount is called Pandava, or yellow-white colour. It is said that "the glory of his person shone forth with double power, that his body was 'glorious as bright golden image', that he 'shone as the brightness of the sun and moon', that bystanders expressed their opinion that he could not be 'an everyday person,' or 'a mortal man', and that his body was divided into three parts, from each of which a ray of light issued forth."

21. On one occasion during his career on earth, Jesus is reported to have been transfigured: "Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment as white as the light."

22. Buddha performed great miracles for the good of mankind, and the legends concerning him are full of the greatest prodigies and wonders.	22. Jesus performed great miracles for the good of mankind, and the legends concerning him are full of the greatest prodigies and wonders.
23. By prayers in the name of Buddha his followers expect to receive the rewards of paradise.	23. By prayers in the name of Jesus, his followers expect to receive the rewards of paradise.
24. When Buddha died and was buried, the coverings of the body unrolled themselves, and the lid of his coffin was opened by supernatural powers.	24. When Jesus died and was buried, the coverings of his body were unrolled from off him, and his tomb was opened by supernatural powers.
25. Buddha ascended bodily to the celestial regions, when his mission on earth was fulfilled.	25. Jesus ascended bodily to the celestial regions, when his mission on earth was fulfilled.
26. Buddha is to come upon the earth again in the latter days, his mission being to restore the world to order and happiness.	26. Jesus is to come upon the earth again in the latter days, his mission being to restore the world to order and happiness.
27. Buddha is to be the judge of the dead.	27. Jesus is to be the judge of the dead.
28. Buddha is Alpha and Omega, without be-	28. Jesus is Alpha and Omega, without be-

ginning or end, "the Supreme Being, the Eternal One."	ginning or end, the Supreme Being, the Eternal One.
29. Buddha is represented as saying: "Let all the sins that were committed in this world fall on me that the world may be delivered."	29. Jesus is represented as the Saviour of mankind, and all sins that are committed in this world may fall on him that the world may be delivered.
30. Buddha said: "Hide your good deeds, and confess before the world the sins you have committed."	30. Jesus taught men to hide their good deeds, and to confess before the world the sins they had committed.
31. Buddha was described as a superhuman organ of light, to whom a superhuman organ of darkness, Mara or Naga, the Evil Serpent, was opposed.	31. Jesus was described as a superhuman organ of light—"the Sun of Righteousness"—opposed by "the old Serpent", the Satan, hinderer, or adversary.
32. Buddha came, not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law. He delighted in "representing himself as a mere link in a long chain of enlightened teachers."	32. Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
33. One day Ananda, the disciple of Buddha, after a long walk in country, meets with Matangi, a woman	33. One day Jesus, after a long walk, cometh to the city of Samaria and being wearied with the journey,

of the low caste of the Kandalas, near a well, and asks her for some water. She tells him what she is, and that she must not come near him. But he replies: "My sister, I ask not for thy caste or thy family, I ask only for a draught of water." She afterwards became a disciple of Buddha.	sat on a well. While there, a woman of Samaria came to draw water and Jesus said unto her: "Give me to drink." "Then said the woman unto him: How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."
34. According to Buddha, the motive of all our actions should be pity or love for our neighbour.	34. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you."
35. During the early part of his career as a teacher, Buddha went to the city of Benares, and there delivered a discourse, by which Condanya, and afterwards four others, were induced to become his disciples. From that period, whenever he preached, multitudes of men and women embraced his doctrines.	35. During the early part of his career as a teacher, Jesus went to the city of Capernaum, and there delivered a discourse. It was at this time that four fishermen were induced to be come his disciples. From that period, whenever he preached, multitudes of men and women embraced his doctrines.
36. Those who became disciples of Buddha were	36. Those who became disciples of Jesus

told that they must "renounce the world", give up all their riches, and avow poverty.	were told that they must renounce the world, give up all their riches, and avow poverty.
37. It is recorded in the "Sacred Canon" of the Buddhists that the multitudes "required a sign" from Buddha "that they might believe."	37. It is recorded in the "Sacred Canon" of the Christians that the multitudes required a sign from Jesus that they might believe.
38. When Buddha's time on earth was about coming to a close, he, "foreseeing the things that would happen in future times", said to his disciple Ananda: "Ananda, when I am gone, you must not think there is no Buddha; the discourses I have delivered, and the precepts I have enjoined, must be my successors or representatives, and be to you as Buddha."	38. When Jesus' time on earth was about coming to a close, he told of the things that would happen in future times, and said unto his disciples: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."
39. In the Buddhist Somadeva is to be found the following: "To give away our riches is considered the most difficult virtue in the world; he who gives away	39. "And behold one, came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?. . . .Jesus said unto him: If thou wilt be perfect,

his riches is like a man who gives away his life; for our very life seems to cling to our riches. But Buddha, when his mind was moved by pity, gave his life like grass, for the sake of others. Why should we think of miserable riches? By this exalted virtue Buddha, when he was freed from all desires, and had obtained divine knowledge, attained into Buddhahood. Therefore, let a wise man, after he has turned away his desires from all pleasures, do good to all beings, even unto sacrificing his own life, that thus he may attain to true knowledge."

go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

40. Buddha's aim was to establish a "Religious Kingdom," a "Kingdom of Heaven."

40. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

41. Buddha said: "I now desire to turn the wheel of the excellent law. For this purpose am I going to the city

41. Jesus, after his temptation by the devil, began to establish the dominion of his religion and he went for

of Benares, to give light to those enshrouded in darkness, and to open the gate of Immortality to man."

this purpose to the city of Capernaum. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

42. Buddha said: "Though the heavens were to fall to earth, and the great world be swallowed up and pass away: Though Mount Sumera were to crack to pieces, and the great ocean be dried up, yet, Ananda, be assured, the words of Buddha are true."

42. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "Verily I say unto you...... heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

43. Buddha said: "There is no passion more violent than voluptuousness. Happily there is but one such passion. If there were two, not a man in the whole universe could follow the truth." "Beware of fixing your eyes upon women. If you find yourself in their company, let it be as though you were not present. If you speak with them, guard well your hearts."

43. Jesus said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

44. Buddha said: "A wise man should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of live coals. One who is not able to live in a state of celibacy should not commit adultery."

44. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman", "but if they cannot contain let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn." "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband."

45. Buddhism is convinced that if a man reaps sorrow, disappointment, pain, he himself, and no other, must at some time have sown folly, error, sin; and if not in this life then in some former birth.

45. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And, his disciples asked him saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents that he was born blind?"

46. Buddha knew the thoughts of others: "by directing his mind to the thoughts of others, he can know the thoughts of all beings."

46. Jesus knew the thoughts of others. By directing his mind to the thoughts of others, he knew the thoughts of all beings.

47. In the Somadeva a story is related of a Buddhist ascetic whose eye offended him; he, therefore, plucked it out and cast it away.

47. It is related in the New Testament that Jesus said: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee."

48. When Buddha was about to become an ascetic, and when riding on the horse "Kantaka", his path was strewn with flowers, thrown there by Devas.

48. When Jesus was entering Jerusalem, riding on an ass, his path was strewn with palm branches, thrown there by the multitude.

CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN FESTIVALS, RITES AND SYMBOLS

"Each of the major festivals of the Christian calendar," says a liberal Christian scholar of religion, "carries on the tradition of earlier Pagan beliefs, which the early Church, with a wisdom which still persists in Roman Catholic missionary efforts in its relation with primitive peoples, had adopted and transformed in the service of the Christian faith."[1]

Christmas

A passing reference has been made already to the birthdate of Jesus, which is believed by Christians to be the 25th of December. But there are two well-established facts in this connection which demand a serious consideration. Firstly, this date is the date of the Nativity of the Sun in the Julian Calendar. This and the neighbouring dates are connected with winter solstice, which is accompanied by what was termed by the votaries of the sun-worship cults as the 'birth' of the sun. Many a sun-god of the ancient world was born on this or neighbouring dates. Secondly, there are no proofs to locate the birth of Jesus on this date, as admitted even by such a conservative Christian scholar as Dean Farrar. In fact, it was not until the year 530 A.C. that Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian monk, abbot and astronomer,

1 Sir Richard Gregory: *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 111.

fixed the date of the birth of Jesus as December 25th. But he has not informed us on what authority he did so.[1] The fact that even today the Greek Church observes Christmas on January 7th and not on December 25th is significant.

"*Christmas*," says R. Gregory[2], "is a Pagan festival, which was adopted for the celebration of the Nativity about the middle of the fourth century in order to wean converts from Pagan ceremonials taking place at that season. In Northern Europe it is the midwinter festival of Yule, which the associations of the Yule log and other customs would assign to a derivation from sun-worship; in Southern Europe it is mainly, though not solely, a festival of the mother-son worship (with a shadowy father, Joseph, in the background, as seen in the Mangers of the Christmas celebrations of Mediterranean peoples today) which can be traced back through the ages as the dominant cult of the Mediterranean....... An interesting point arises out of the celebration of Christmas as popularly observed in Britain. A double strain is to be observed. While as a whole the feastings and rejoicings of the Yule ceremony predominate, the Manger, which is the most conspicuous feature of the popular celebration in Mediterranean countries, also appears in England with other associated customs. It was once customary for children to construct a manger, which they carried round soliciting alms. The two forms of celebration belong to entirely different systems of belief, and it is evident that in Britain a double strain of tradition, deriving from north and south, has survived."

Easter and Related Festivals

The festival of *Easter* (Anglo-Saxon, *Eostre*) derived its significance from the goddess of Light

1 *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. "Christmas".

2 *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 113.

and Spring in the ancient world. Her festival, which fell after the vernal equinox, *i.e.*, at the commencement of the spring season, was celebrated in Ireland and Egypt by distributing and eating eggs, much in the same way as the Christians do today in commemoration of the resurrection of him whom they believe to have brought a new life to humanity by giving his blood. Sir Richard Gregory remarks: "Use of the position of celestial bodies to determine the dates of religious festivals is represented by the celebrations of *Passover* and *Easter*. The Passover is celebrated by the Jews as a spring festival commemorating their exodus from Egypt, and is regarded as the festival of freedom. According to Robertson Smith,[1] the Israelites being a pastoral people, sacrificed the firstlings of their stock in the spring as a thank-offering and when they settled in Canaan they found there an agricultural festival connected with the beginning of the barley harvest, which coincided in point of date with the Passover and was accordingly associated with it. This suggests a connection with the Pascal lamb on the fourteenth of a month and also the feast of Unleavened Bread on the following day, when a peace-offering of a sheaf of barley was to be made. The first Christians observed the Jewish festivals, but in a new spirit, and the Passover, with a new conception added to it of Christ as the true Pascal lamb, and the first fruit from the dead, continued to be observed, and became the Christian Easter..........Easter as is shown by a number of customs and beliefs, is in the main a festival of sun-worship as the sun begins to regain strength; while *Whitsuntide*, a feast around which folk-dancing clusters in a large number of widely distributed customs, is a ceremonial of carrying out an actor who impersonates the dead winter and his rejuvenation in the character of the young and vigorous spring."[2]

1 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th Edition, art: "Passover".

2 *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, pp. 100, 111.

The manner of fixing the date of Easter year by year is itself a proof of its connection with the sky-scriptures. For, it is necessary for this purpose to know first the date of the spring equinox and then the date of the first new moon following it. This procedure reminds us of the method employed by the priests in ancient Egypt five thousand years ago.

Indeed, not only Easter but all those movable festivals in the ecclesiastical calendar which are fixed with reference to its date, should be regarded as of Pagan origin. The following is a list of such festivals according to the *Nautical Almanac:*

	Days before Easter		Days after Easter
Septuagesima Sunday	63	*Low Sunday*	7
Quinquagesima Sunday	49	*Rogation Sunday*	35
Ash Wednesday	46	*Ascension Day*	39
Quadragesima Sunday	42	*Whit Sunday*	49
Palm Sunday	7	*Trinity Sunday*	56
Good Friday	2	*Corpus Christi*	60

We must also bear in mind the fact that during the first three centuries of the Christian era there were strong differences of opinion between the western and eastern Churches as to the day on which the Paschal feast should commence. An agreement could be forced only by Constantine after the Council of Nice in 325 A.C. Socrates, the Church

historian of the fifth century, has recorded the announcement of the Council in their epistle to the Church of Alexandria. The announcement speaks for itself:

"We also send you good news concerning the unanimous consent of all, in reference to the celebration of the most solemn feast of Easter; for the difference also has been made up by the assistance of your prayers; so that all the brethren in the east, who formerly celebrated this festival at the same time as the Jews, will in future conform to the Romans and to us and to all who have of old observed our manner of celebrating Easter."

Feast of St. John

John the Baptist is reported to have remarked in the Gospel attributed to him (III : 30): "He (*i.e.*, Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease." Now, the birthday of John is believed to be June 23rd, after which the sun begins to decline in its warmth, while, as stated before, the birthday of Jesus corresponds with the date after which the sun begins to increase in its power.

"The popular observances which obtained among the peasant population of the countryside in connection with Eve and Feast of St. John at midsummer were of a kind to be attributed for the most part to a survival of sun-worship. Such, for example, are the vigils associated with Stonehenge and other stone circles, and also in part the midsummer bonfires—measures which increase the power of the sun as the year progresses towards the harvest. But these bonfires were also effective to drive away evil influences from the ripening crops, thus carrying on the function of May fires."[1]

1 *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 112.

Michaelmas and the Feast of All Souls

"Michaelmas and the Feast of all Souls in November have subsumed in the Harvest Festival and the celebration of the memory of the Blessed Dead both the Pagan feasts of the First Fruits, without which offering to the gods it was not safe for the farmer, his household, or his stock to partake of the newly gathered fruits of the earth, and the November celebration of the Feast of the Dead, with which the Celtic and Pagan year began. The memory of this Celtic year, beginning in November, long survived in the custom found in England, certainly down to only a few years ago, of hiring farm hands, male and female, for the following year at the country fairs held at the beginning of November."[1]

Annunciation of the Virgin

The Annunciation of the Virgin (Angel's Salutation to the Virgin) is said to have taken place on March 25th, *i.e.*, after the spring equinox. This has a reference to the sky-scriptures, for if December 25th was to be the date of the Nativity of Jesus, no other date could be fixed for Annunciation.

Candlemas

The festival of Candlemas (Purification of the Virgin) takes place on February 2nd. A similar festival called *Juno Februata* (purified) was celebrated in the same month by the Pagans of the Roman empire, and the rites included candle processions.

According to Sir Gregory, "the feast of Candlemas in early February is a fire festival in which, at the renewal of agricultural operations, the evils of the past dead season of winter are driven out by the magical powers of fire, while the Festival of Our Lady in the same month represents the invocation

1 *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 112.

of the mother-goddess in a ceremonial for the renewal of the powers of fertility in the coming spring."[1]

Assumption of the Virgin

The Assumption of the Virgin is celebrated on August 15th. But this date bears a relation to the sun-worship cults, since on this very date the Zodiacal sign *Virgo*—represented sometimes by a woman with a sheaf of corn in her hand and sometimes by a Virgin Mother with an infant Saviour, as, for instance, in the figures of the infant Horus and his Virgin Mother on the margin of the Alexandrian Calendar—also disappears into the rays of the Sun, as if ascending into heaven away from the human eye.

Nativity of the Virgin

The Nativity of the Virgin occurs on September 7th. This, again, has an astronomical significance, because on this very day *Virgo* also reappears on the horizon.

Holy Communion

As already pointed out, the rite of Holy Communion has been borrowed, like other Christian festivals, from the ancient sun-worship cults, where Eucharistic ceremony was performed to bring the devotee into a state of unification with the deity by participation in the supper. According to Elie Reclus[2]: "In the truly orthodox conception of sacrifice, the consecrated offering, be it man, woman or virgin, lamb or heifer, cock or dove, represents the deity himself."

1 *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 111.
2 *Primitive Folk*, IV.

Sabbath

That Jesus had come 'not to destroy but to fulfil' the Judaic Law cannot be denied. Now, according to that law, the day of Sabbath is Saturday and not Sunday, which, as *Dies Soli*, was the holy day of the sun-god Apollo, the patron-deity of the Roman empire during Constantine's regime. Evidently Sunday was substituted only to perfect the resemblance between Christianity and Paganism.

Position of the Altar

The position of the altar in the Christian churches leads us to the same conclusion. Why must it always face the east, no matter whether a church is built to the west or east of the sacred territory of Judaea? Obviously because East is the 'rising place' of the sun, while West is its 'setting place' and the 'abode of the demon of Darkness' according to Roman mythology. It should be noted in this connection that this rule was not so strictly observed during the early days of the Christian Church and that it acquired the status of law only after Christianity had become the popular religion of the Roman empire.

Monks and Nuns

The institution of monks and nuns has been similarly borrowed from Paganism. Buddhism had its monks and nuns, and, among the sun-worship cults, it was a very important institution in the cult of Mithra. The Mithraic monks used to have a distinctive symbol on the head, namely, the tonsure —a bare circular space, formed by shaving off the hair, and meant to represent the disc of the sun, their deity. The monks in the Romish Church of

Christianity also observe this rite, and this only proves Christianity to be one of the many sun-worship cults.

The Cross

Now we come to Christian symbols. The Cross did not originate with Christianity. It was not included in the early lists of Christian symbols, as, for instance, the one prepared by St. Clement. It was first of all adopted as a symbol by Constantine who is alleged to have seen it in a vision. Among the sun-worshippers it was esteemed as the symbol of life, and so it is with the Christians.

There is an Egyptian cross in the Municipal Museum of Alexandria. Another non-Christian cross has been unearthed in Ireland. It belongs to the cult of Mithra and bears a crucified effigy.

The Fish

Fish was used as a Christian symbol before the Cross was adopted, and this fact again has a reference to the sky-scriptures. For, the Christian Epiphany falls in the month of February, and in the same month the sun passes the zodiacal sign *Pisces* (Fish).

The Lamb

While passing the equator in its ecliptic revolution, the sun makes the form of a cross. At the time when the popular sun-worship cults of the Roman empire originated, the point where the ecliptic crossed the equator was in the region of the constellation *Aries* or the He-Lamb. Hence the Lamb became the symbol of the Rising Saviour, the sun-god. The Christians also in their days adopted the Lamb as the symbol of their Saviour[1].

1 Edward Carpenter : *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 39.

The Serpent and the Scorpion

According to the Bible, the Devil came to Eve in the garden of Eden in the form of a serpent. Hence the Serpent is the symbol of the adversary of the forces of life and light. But there is a strange fact that in Christian paintings the serpent appears with the barbed tail of the Scorpion. The reason for this should be sought in the sky-scriptures. In the language of the Zodiac, the sun enters the Scorpion at the autumnal equinox, after which it begins to decline. Hence the Scorpion has become the symbol of the 'Prince of Darkness', just as Lamb or Ram is the symbol of the 'God of Light'. This explains the barbed tail of the serpent in Christian symbolism.

TITLES OF JESUS

The following are some of the titles commonly used for Jesus in the Christian Churches:

God's First-Begotten Son;
The Intermediary between God and man;
The Intercessor with the Father;
The Good Shepherd;
The Image of God;
The Foundation of the Universe;
The Bread of Life;
The Sinless;
The Price of Sin;
The Gift of God to man to ransom his sins;
The High Priest;
The Second God;
The Interpreter of God to man;
The Giver of the Water of Everlasting Life;
Seated Next to God;
The Physician and Healer of Souls;
God of the Triune nature and the Son to take the second place in the Holy Trinity.

It is now common knowledge that the phraseology of which these titles form part was introduced into Christianity by St. Paul. Whether, while formulating this phraseology, he received inspiration from the Holy Ghost, as the Christians believe, or from the neo-Platonists, as modern research proves, can best be decided by referring to the writings of Philo, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher of Alexandria and contemporary of Jesus. His profound influence on Christian thought is admitted by all. For instance, Dr. Smith says[1]: "It is impossible not to feel the important office which the mystic philosophy, of which Philo is the representative, fulfilled in preparing for the apprehension of the highest Christian truth." Here are a few extracts from Philo's writings which form the source of the above-mentioned titles of Jesus:

> "His Word which is his Interpreter."[2]

> "To his Word he gave this special gift that He should stand as an Intercessor between the Creator and the created."[3]

> "We maintain that by the High Priest is meant the Word Who is free from all transgression, being of heavenly parentage."[4]

> "The Word of God is the Physician and Healer of all our evils."[5]

> "The heavenly food......is the Divine Word."[6]

> "The Image of God is His Eternal Word."[7]

1 *The Dictionary of the Bible*, art: "Alexandria".
2 *De Legis Allegor*, II, 73.
3 *Quis Rerum Divin. Heres*, I, 501.
4 *De Profugis*, I, 562, 13.
5 *De Legis Allegor* I., 122, 17.
6 *De Deler. Potiori Infid.*, I, 213, 45.
7 *De Confu. Ling.*, I, 427.

"The High Priest is the Divine Word, hence His head is annointed."[1]

"The Shepherd of His holy flocks."[2]

"What man is there of true judgment who, when he sees the deeds of most men, is not ready to call out aloud to God, the Great Saviour, that He would be pleased to take off his sin, and, by appointing a price and ransom for the soul, restore it to its liberty?"[3]

"He, therefore, exhorts every person who is able to exert himself in the race which he is to run to bend his course without remission to the Divine Word above, who is the Fountain-Head of all wisdom, that by drinking this sacred spring, he, instead of death, may receive the reward of everlasting life."[4]

"Being the Image of God and the First-Born of all intelligent creatures, He is seated immediately next to the One God without any interval of separation."[5]

"Even if no one is as yet worthy to be called a Son of God, one should nevertheless labour earnestly to be adorned like unto His First Born Son, the Word."[6]

1 *De Somniis*, I, 653.

2 *De Agric.* I, 308, 27.

3 *De Confu. Ling.*, I, 418.

4 *De Profugis*, I, 560, 31.

5 *Ibid*, 561, 16.

6 *De Confu. Ling.*, I, 427.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGY

The foregoing examination of the life of Jesus, the doctrines of Christianity, and the festivals, rites and symbolism of the Church, is, I believe, enough to prove that Christianity is *not* a religion based on an immutable Divine Revelation but a survival of the Pagan cults of primitive mankind.

This fact was known even in the early days of Christianity, when many a Christian Father had to frame apologies to meet the charge of plagiarism. The author of *The Intellectual Development of Europe*[1] has quoted the following accusations of Faustus addressed to St. Augustine:

"You have substituted your agape for the sacrifices of the Pagans; for their idols your martyrs, whom you serve with the very same honours. You appease the shades of the dead with wine and feasts; you celebrate the solemn festivals of the Gentiles; their manners, those you have retained without any alteration. Nothing distinguishes you from the Pagans except that you hold your assemblies apart from them."

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1 Vol. I, p. 310.

The early Fathers tried to reply to such allegations by laying the whole blame on the shoulders of Satan. The following replies of Justin Martyr and Tertulian are typical. Justin Martyr says:

"It having reached the Devil's ears that the prophets had foretold the coming of Christ (the Son of God), he set the heathen poets to bring forward a great many who should be called the sons of Jove. The Devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same character as the prodigious fables related of the sons of Jove......By declaring the Logos, the first begotten of God, Our Master Jesus, to be born of a virgin, without any human mixture, we (Christians) say no more in this than what you (Pagans) say of those whom you style the sons of Jove. For you need not be told what a parcel of sons the writers most in vogue among you assigned to Jove......As to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be no more than man, yet the title of the Son of God is very justifiable, upon account of his wisdom, considering that you (Pagans) have your Mercury in worship under the title of the Word, a messenger of God......As to his (Jesus) being born of a virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that......if Jupiter could send a parcel of sons out of virgin mothers, the Father in heaven could do the same at least in our case."[1]

He further says: "The apostles in the commentaries written by themselves which we call Gospels, have delivered down to us how that Jesus thus commanded them: "He having taken bread, after that he had given thanks, said: Do this in commemoration of Me; this is My body; also having taken the cup and returned thanks, He said: This is My blood, and delivered it unto them alone'; which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries

1 1 *Apol.*, Chap. 22.

of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done. For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of the one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn."

Tertulian says:

"The Devil, by the mysteries of his idols, imitates even the main parts of the divine mysteries. He also baptises his worshippers in water, and makes them believe that this purifies them of their crimes. There Mithra sets his mark on the forehead of his soldiers; he celebrates the oblation of bread; he offers an image of the resurrection, and presents at once the crown and sword; he limits his chief priest to a single marriage; he even has virgins and his ascetics (*continentes*)."[2]

Such apologies, however, could not satisfy the enlightened men and women of this age. Hence modern apologists had to devise other weapons of defence.

Some thinkers, especially of the seventeenth century, asserted that "the Bible contains a pure, the myths a distorted, form of an original revelation."[3]

But to this Professor Max Muller replied: "The theory that there was a primeval preternatural revelation granted to the fathers of the human race, and that the grains of truth which catch our eye when exploring the temples of heathen gods are the scattered fragments of that sacred heirloom—the seeds that fell by the wayside or upon stony places—would find but few supporters at present; no more, in fact, than the theory that there was in the beginning one complete and perfect primeval language,

1 1 *Apol.*, Chap. 66.

2 Quoted by Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, p. 322.

3 *Encyc. Brit.*, art: "Mythology".

broken up in later times into the numberless languages of the world."[1]

Another set of thinkers tried to meet the situation by tracing the origin of the Pagan ideas in the Old Testament. But this attempt also failed. "The opinion that the Pagan religions were mere corruptions of the religion of the Old Testament once supported by men of high authority and great learning, is now as completely surrendered as the attempts to explain Greek and Latin as corruptions of Hebrew."[2]

The Christian apologists of the present day have become convinced, however, that it is futile to deny the independent origin of the pre-Christian Pagan ideology. Many of them, like the Modernists, an account of whose activities will be given in the next chapter, have gone even so far as to admit frankly that it was not the devil who in his own devilish way introduced the beliefs and rites of the Christian Church into the Pagan cults, of which these formed part centuries before the advent of Jesus, but that it was Paul who, in order to make the way smooth for the Pagans to enter the "Christian" Church, borrowed their beliefs and rites wholesale and incorporated them in the simple faith of Jesus. The Modernists consequently confine their faith to a mystic consolation derived from the *idea* of Christ.

The more conservative section of Christian thinkers seems to be either groping in the dark in utter confusion or else playing with religion. They cannot deny the Pagan character of Christianity, but they wish to claim for it uniqueness and originality. They seem to feel that they are not on solid ground; but still they try to console themselves

1 *The Science of Religion*, p. 40.

2 *Ibid.*

with some subterfuge. Here are two such statements coming from eminent divines.

The well-known Bishop Gore faces the critics of Christianity with these words: "You say that we find in Christianity the relic of Paganism. On the contrary, we find in Paganism, intermingled with much that is false, superstitious and horrible, the *anticipations of Christianity.*"

Canon C.H. Robinson admits the debt of Pagan thought but regards it a unique merit of Christianity. He says: "If Greek and Roman thought were needed for a full appreciation of the meaning of the Incarnation, why may we not say the same of Indian and Chinese thought? Surely we are justified in believing that every country and every people have something to contribute to Christianity, and that the completion of the Christian *revelation* (?) awaits the contribution of each. We believe that there are many important aspects of the Christian truth which have never been understood, simply because Christianity has not yet been reflected in the experience of those nations of the world which are still heathen."[1]

1 *Studies in the Character of Christ*, IV, p. 102.

CONCLUSION

Seen in the light of facts presented in this chapter the arguments of Bishop Gore and Canon Robinson come out to be mere face-saving devices. They admit in so many words that Christianity has Pagan elements. But if these elements are really later accretions, the arguments collapse automatically. The following statement, coming from Dean Inge, a much greater Christian scholar than either Bishop Gore or Canon Robinson, gives the whole case in a nutshell:

"Christianity, for the historian, is a great river which had its head-waters in Palestine, but received affluents from all sides. Its founder appeared to his contemporaries as 'the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.' He followed and far surpassed John the Baptist, who revived the old prophetic tradition after a long interval. The function of the prophets had been to preach moral, including social reform, to denounce idolatry and oppression, to warn their countrymen that national vices must lead to national disasters, and to spiritualise and moralise religion which was always in danger of becoming external and formal under the domination of the priests and legists.

"These were the main topics of John the Baptist's preaching and Christ took up his message where he left it. There is no evidence that Christ, during his ministry on earth attempted to found a new institutional religion. His disciples in Palestine were content to remain orthodox Jews, who obeyed the Law, and, like many other Jews, expected the coming of the Messiah who was to deliver their country.

"*The greatest of all crises through which Christianity has passed was its transplantation into the soil of European culture which was the work of St. Paul's life.* The Church then made its choice; it gained Europe and lost Asia. Compared with this momentous development even the Reformation was of secondary importance.

"The Reformers believed that they were clearing away a mass of Pagan accretions from Christianity, and that they were returning to the original Gospel. They were really doing the first, but not the second. *Latin Christianity was and is a Mediterranean religion.*[1] *It is the form which Christianity had to take among the subjects of the Roman Empire......Christianity was afterwards corrupted and mixed up with elements which have nothing to do with the original Gospel.* Christ knew nothing of Greek philosophy; but the theology of the Church is built upon the speculations of the Platonists, and on what medieval schoolmen believed to be the doctrines of Aristotle."[2]

Sir Richard Gregory supports the Dean with these words:

"Christian societies have developed along different lines according to the conceptions of different peoples, and they include survivals of Paganism......*It was a development of the native religion under the influence of the new teaching, and not an imposition of, or conversion to, Christianity itself,* which produced these different attitudes of mind."[3]

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1 The Dean appears to exclude Protestantism, but it is hard to understand his grounds for it. As institutional religions, Protestantism and Catholicism do not seem to differ much except in the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope. In truth, the same facts which prove Catholicism to be of Pagan origin, also establish the Pagan character of Protestantism.

2 Essay on *Modernism in Religion.*

3 *Religion in Science and Civilisation,* p. 191.

IV

CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

SUPERSTITION AND PERSECUTION

WE might broadly classify the parties in the so-called Christendom into five groups: (1) Free-thinkers, Atheists and Agnostics; (2) Orthodox Christians; (3) Modernist Christians; (4) Non-Christian Theists; (5) Converts to the non-Christian religions.

Ever since the conversion[1] of Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the state-religion of the Byzantine Empire, two factors have played a most conspicuous part in the history of the Christian Church, viz., *Superstition* and *Persecution*.

1 Several scholars are of the opinion that Constantine's conversion was of a political nature. It is significant that even after his conversion, he retained the figure of Apollo upon his seal with the inscription: "To the Invincible Sun, my companion." As regards the character of this first Christian Emperor, Davenport calls him "the second Nero" and remarks that he "drowned his wife in boiling water; put to death his own son Crispus; murdered the two husbands of his sisters, Constantia and Anastia; murdered his father-in-law, Maximilian Hercules; murdered his nephew, the son of his sister Constantia, a boy only twelve yeras of age, together with some others not so nearly related, among whom was Spoater, a pagan priest, who refused to give him absolution for the murder of his (Constantine's) father-in-law." (*Muhammad and Koran*, p. 144, Footnote).

It is an undeniable fact that the rise of Christianity synchronised with the extinction of the last flames of Graeco-Roman intellectual culture and the subsequent commencement of that dark and semi-barbaric era of European history in which both intellectual enlightenment and moral earnestness were wanting. How wretched Europe's condition became and remained until recent times can be read in Milman's *Latin Christianity*, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Professor Lecky's *History of European Morals* and *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, Draper's *Conflict between Religion and Science*, and a number of other standard books.

That Christianity was directly and mainly responsible for that mental and moral degeneration of Europe is borne out by the fierce and prolonged war which she waged against the forces of enlightenment and progress. The following is a typical incident which occurred in the early stages of the conflict: "In the streets of Alexandria, before the eyes of the civilised world, the noblest woman of antiquity was slaughtered with nameless horrors by a Christian who bears the title of saint in the annals of Christendom, and the who, in modern times, has found an apologist. The eloquent pages of Draper furnish a vivid account of the atrocious crime which will always remain one of the greatest blots on Christianity. A beautiful, wise, and virtuous woman, whose lecture-room was full to overflowing with the wealth and fashion of Alexandria, was attacked as she was coming out of her academy by a mob of zealous professors of Christianity. Amidst the fearful yelling of these defenders of the faith she was dragged from her chariot, and in the public street stripped naked. Paralysed with fear, she was hauled into an adjoining church, and there killed by the club of a 'saint'. The poor naked corpse was outraged and then dismembered; but the diabolical crime was not completed until they had scraped the flesh from the

bones with oyster shells and cast the remnants into the fire. Christendom honoured with canonisation the fiend who instigated this terrible and revolting atrocity, and the blood of martyred Hypatia was avenged only by the sword of Amru (the Muslim conqueror of Egypt)!"[1]

The Roman Catholic Fathers vied with each other in denouncing secular learning as Satanic. St. Augustine in his *Retraction* stigmatised Plato and Platonists as "impious men." Pope Gregory, in a letter to Desiderus, bishop of Nienne, wrote: "After tha t, we heard a thing that cannot be repeated without a feeling of shame, namely, that you are teaching grammar to some......This troubled us greatly." At another place in the same letter he described even elementary secular culture as "horrible and execrable." The Parliament of Paris (1624) prohibited under pain of punishment any improved chemical research. The Papal Bull issued in the enlightened nineteenth century (1864) laid down the law: "If any one says that the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself with progress, liberalism, and modern civilisation, let him be anathema."[2]

"The period of Catholic ascendency," says Professor Lecky, "is on the whole the most deplorable in the history of mankind."

But, then, the Reformed Church was as great a criminal in this respect as the Catholic. Martin Luther remarked about Copernicus: "This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy, but Sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth"; and Calvin asked: "Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of Holy Scripture?"[3] Melancthon observed: "Those who set forth such theories

1 Ameer Ali: *Spirit of Islam*, Intr. p. liii.

2 Quoted by Dean W. R. Inge in *The Church in the World*, p. 52.

3 Dean W.R. Inge: *The Church in the World*.

must have no sense of decency." He taught that demons were working in the entire range of physical phenomena.[1] The Protestant authorities at Wittenburg strictly forbade the teaching of the new revelations of the telescope, and the professors had to take oath that they would teach only the old system.

It is evident that a creed which thrives on ignorance and *superstition* can maintain its prestige, nay its very existence, only by employing the weapon of *persecution*. Naturally, therefore, the Christian Church resorted to it as soon as Constantine extended to it the patronage of his state and reorganised it at the Council of Nice (325 A.C.). "It was at the Council of Nice," says Davenport,[2] "that Constantine invested the priesthood with that power whence flowed the most disastrous consequences, as the following summary will show: the massacres and devastations of nine mad crusades of Christians against unoffending Turks, during nearly two hundred years, in which many millions of human beings perished; the massacres of the Anabaptists; the massacres of the Lutherans and papists, from the Rhine to the extremity of the North; the massacres ordered by Henry VIII and his daughter Mary; the massacres of St. Bartholomew in France; and forty years more of other massacres between the time of Francis I and the entry of Henry IV into Paris; the massacres of the Inquisition, which are more execrable still as being judicially committed, to say nothing of the innumerable schisms and twenty years of popes against popes, bishops against bishops, the poisonings, the assassinations, the cruel rapines, and insolent pretensions of more than a dozen popes, who far exceeded a Nero or a Caligula in every species of crime, vice and wickedness; and

1 Thomas Aquinas, the official philosopher of Catholicism, also had taught: "It is a dogma of the faith that demons can produce wind, storm, rain and fire from heaven."

2 *Muhammad and Koran*, pp. 144, 145.

lastly, to conclude this frightful list, the massacre of twelve millions of the inhabitants of the new world, executed Crucifix in hand!"

"No wild beasts," remarked Emperor Julian, "are so hostile to man as Christian sects in general are to one another."

A diplomatic secretary of Pope Pius VII declared that "it was of the essence of the Catholic religion to be intolerant."[1]

As for Protestantism: "Persecution is the deadly original sin of the Reformed Church, that which cools every honest man's zeal for their cause, in proportion as his reading becomes more expansive."[2]

"The Christian Church," said Rev. Charles Voysey (in a sermon preached at the Theistic Church, London, October 22nd, 1905), "has been more cruel and shed more human blood than any other Church or institution in the world."

Unfortunately for Christianity, however, her policy of persecution could not prove successful for long. The Church could not keep her Pagan heritage of primitive superstitions immune once the pioneers of scientific learning had made up their minds to fight a decisive war, and this occurred when the light of learning emanating from the European and Asiatic universities of Islam had succeeded in finally disturbing the gloom of Christendom. Inquisition was instituted forthwith and science and philosophy were persecuted on the widest scale, but ultimately Christianity had to suffer a crushing defeat.

The French scientist, Dr. Paul Topinard, has briefly summed up the process of this scientific

1 Michail: *China and Christianity*, p. 47.

2 Hallam: *Constitutional History of England*, Vol. I, Chap. ii, p. 62.

revolution thus:[1] "Christianity, in effect, instead of conquering the Pagan world, was conquered by it, as Huxley has remarked......During the Middle Ages science had disappeared from the West. Philosophy, hemmed in between metaphysics and theology, became scholasticism......Then a concourse of circumstances occurred which, as fifteen centuries before, was to transform the Western world, although differently, and which inaugurated modern times, to wit: *The return to the West of the knowledge that had taken refuge among the Arabs;* the discovery of printing, which spread everywhere trustworthy texts; the discovery of the New World, which quadrupled the surface of the earth to be observed and studied; the awakening of science, with Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Rondelet, Vesalius, Harvey;......the conquests of science began to make themselves felt. There was now less insistence on God and more on the world, man, morals and the conditions of social life."

1 *Science and Faith*, Ch. VIII.

FREE-THOUGHT, AGNOSTICISM AND ATHEISM

The ultimate outcome of the scientific ferment is widespread free-thought, agnosticism and atheism, which have assumed gigantic proportions at the present day. "Whichever way we turn, the same spectacle confronts us. In France, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, the United States, Brazil and Argentina (where the *men* are practically all agnostics), free-thought is making rapid progress......Retarded by Christianity itself —or, shall we say, its interpreters?—knowlege was unable to advance; it receded, and the clock was put back in scientific research. Darkness reigned supreme for over a thousand years. At last the dawn began to break. What was the result? The children of light suffered for their temerity; but their ideas were eventually absorbed and beliefs were suitably reformed. Thus the Copernican system was gradually accepted, and so the discoveries which followed. Then, however, the established beliefs received shock after shock in rapid succession—shocks from which they do not yet show any promise of recovering. The myriads of worlds in the processes of birth and death; the vast antiguity of the earth; the long history of man and his animal origin; the reign of natural law, and the consequent discredit of the supernatural; the suspicions aroused by the study of comparative

mythology; the difficulties of 'literal inspiration'; the doubt thrown by the Higher Criticism on many cherished beliefs—these and the like have shaken the very foundations of our faith, and are the cause of agnosticism among the vast majority of our leaders of thought and science."

The stand taken by the free-thinkers has been ably presented by one of their English representatives:—"Whether religion be no more than 'morality touched by emotion' as Matthew Arnold defines it, or whether all religions are only different ways of expressing a reality which transcends experience and correct expression, we cannot, on that account, accept dogmas that are untrue; we cannot pretend that a supernatural revelation has been vouched to us......Sir Oliver Lodge believes in the ultimate intelligibility of the universe, and with his opinion many of us may agree. Perhaps our present brains will require considerable improvement before we can grasp the deepest things by their aid, or perhaps they will suffice as they are, and only a further acquisition of knowledge may be required. In any case, one sees no reason why, because we have no acceptable theory of life or of death now, we must therefore be equally ignorant many centuries, or even a single century, hence. On the other hand, it is, of course, quite possible that these mysteries will remain for ever unexplained. It may transpire that Haeckel's assumption of a monism in the physical world, and his identification of vital force with ordinary physical and chemical forces, are incorrect. It may transpire that Professor Le Conte was wrong in regarding vital force as just so much withdrawn from the general fund of chemical and physical forces. Radio-activity and the cyanic theory may not furnish a satisfactory solution of the problem of the first appearance of life upon this globe. *But one thing, at all events, our present knowledge seems clearly to indicate: the solution of the problem cannot be in accord with the Christian dogmas.*" "In defend-

ing the faith the advanced school of the Church now frankly admit the difficulties of the old belief; and ask us to accept their new interpretations of Christianity. The older school of theologians, the school who can bring themselves neither to assert the truth of evolution nor to give a decided opinion on the verbal inspiration of the Bible, are unwillingly, very unwillingly, beginning to follow in their wake. The views of the two schools being in conflict on many vital points, it is impossible that they can ever be brought into agreement....The advanced school represent the section which is in close touch with modern thought, so that their new interpretations of the Faith constitute the one and only hope of arresting the advance of agnosticism. On the other hand, the justice of the objections to these new interpretations is borne out by the circumstances that many of the older school would no more think of accepting them than they would of giving up their belief; rather than accept them they prefer to deny the facts of science. Both sides do violence to their reason—the enlightened in using subtleties of their intellect for interpretations which appear transparently false to the orthodox and to the unbeliever; the obscurantist in denying established facts. Consider for a moment what all this means. It means that the modern sceptic has the support of the strictly orthodox when he refutes the only explanations as yet offered to dispel his doubts. It means that the validity of the agnostic's objections to these newfangled interpretations is fully borne out by the common sense of Christians themselves, and that a denial of the facts of science and of the results of biblical research is the only way we can escape from unbelief."[1]

This trend of free-thought, however, remained vague, undefined, and mostly nugatory, up to the middle of the nineteenth century. But afterwards it

1 All quotations in this section have been taken from Vivian Phelip's : *The Churches and Modern Thought*, pp. 21, 22, 264, 265.

began to crystallise in the form of distinct, positive, and well-organised socio-political creeds, which have rapidly replaced the Christian Church in Western lands. We might cite two typical ideologies, namely, Communism and the New German Religion. The first represents a complete and thoroughgoing reaction against all those values for which traditional Christianity and the so-called Christian civilisation stand. The second denotes the direction which the national and racial aspirations of the advanced European peoples have been taking, namely, the establishment of national religions to replace outworn Christianity.

Communism

The attitude of Communism towards religion is sufficiently well-defined to require any elucidation here. The writings of its greatest exponents are explicit on the point that Communism cannot tolerate a compromise between itself and religion. It regards God as "the first and the greatest supporter of despotism" and is out to destroy Theism root and branch. It is not content with maintaining an attitude of indifference or passive hatred towards religion but enjoins upon its followers the duty of waging a relentless war upon all that religion stands for. Lenin, the father of the Russian Revolution, was of the opinion that: "The imperceptible powers of the bourgeoisie created in the human mind an idea of fear which later on developed into the belief in God. Unless this belief in God is erased from the human mind, the curse of bourgeoisie cannot possibly be eradicated."[1] And again: "Religion is the opium for the people. Marxism, therefore, regards all present-day religion and Churches......as instruments of bourgeois reaction which serve as a shield for the exploitation and deception of the working class. The fight against religion is necessary, and

1 Quoted by Mark Patrick: *Hammer and Sickle.*

Marxism says: 'we must fight religion'......the fight must be brought into close connection with the concrete tasks and activity of the class-struggle which is directed to the social roots of religion."[1]

Is it possible then to deny that the triumph of Communism in the world's largest Christian state, i.e., Russia, and its acceptance by large groups in other Western Christian countries means a fatal blow to Christianity? In fact, the success of Communism is a tape by which we can measure not only the utter helplessness of the Christian Church in satisfying the modern minds but also its rapid and certain downfall.

The New German Religion[2]

The New German Religion, which was intended by the Nazis to become the national religion of revolutionary Germany, provides us with another proof of the fact that Christianity is now a spent force. The divergence of its principles from the Christian doctrines and the spirit of revolt which it enshrines form clear indications of its mission. Its gospel is reproduced below from an article of Professor Ernest Bergmann written for the "Friends of Europe" publications:—

Thesis 1.—The German has his own religion which, flows like the living water of his own perception, feeling and thought, and is rooted in his species. We call it the German religion, or the religion of the German people, and understand thereby a faith expressing the peculiarity and integrity of our race.

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1 *The Labour Monthly*, December, 1926.

2 This religion has lately suffered a set-back because of the defeat of the Nazis in the second world-war. Its historical value remains unimpaired, however, and it is this, together with its implications, with which we are concerned here.

As regards the fortunes of Christianity in Germany, those who might have been reclaimed from the New German Religion are far outnumbered by those who have been recently absorbed by Marxist atheism.

Thesis 2.—The German religion is the form of faith appropriate to our age, which we Germans would have today if it had been granted to us to have our native German religion developed undisturbed to the present time.

Thesis 3.—The German of today requires a healthy and natural religion which makes him brave, pious and strong in the struggle for People and Fatherland. Such a reglion is the German religion.

Comments:—What is a Healthy and Natural Religion? It is a religion without the phenomena of disease and degeneration. To this Christianity does not belong. *Christianity is indeed an unhealthy and unnatural religion which is at an end.* For it arose 2,000 years ago among sick, exhausted and despairing men who had lost their belief in life, who despised the world and who waited for the return of Christ and the destruction of the world.

Thesis 4.—The German religion recognises no dogmas, for it is a religion.

Thesis 5.—The German religion is not a religion of revelation in the Christian sense. It rests rather upon a natural 'revelation' of the divine forces in the world and in the human mind.

Thesis 6.—The German religion is a religion of the people. It has nothing to do with atheist propaganda and the disintegration (*Zersetzung*) of religion. We who are genuine followers of the German religion take our stand on the basis of a positive religion.

Comments:—Where Christianity stops, there our religion begins. Belief in a personal God, in revelation and salvation is superstition, not religion. The biologically educated man seeks the solution of his moral and religious problems in the Cosmos, in the

nature and the world of reality, in blood and soil, people and home, nation and Fatherland..... Our religion is no longer the international Christ-God who could not prevent Versailles. Our religion is what grows, living within us, the great, sacred, glowing desire to wash away 1,000 years of German sorrow and make good the sins of the Jewish-Christian alien religion against the German soul.

Thesis 7.—The German religion is not hostile to a Church. It seeks a German Church on the basis of a religious people.

Thesis 8.—God is a moral idea to which we are bound by the eternal creative force of Nature, which works in the world and man. Belief in an other-worldly God is not of Indo-Germanic but of Semitic origin. This kind of God-belief is not a condition of true religion and piety.

Thesis 9.—In the lap of the divine living world the knowing Being or Mind grows. Mind is a natural growth of the world of reality. It is not a finished thing at the beginning, but at the end, at the height of world development.

Thesis. 10.—To God's Being belong Will, Understanding (*Verstand*) and Personality. These are, however, unique in Man. Hence Man is the place (*Art*) of God in the world.

Thesis 11.—Man is not God. But he is God's birth-place. God exists and grows in Man. If God does not come in Man, He never comes. Hence the German religion is the religion of high faith in Man.

Thesis 12.—The German religion recognises no dualism or conflict between body and soul, any more than duality and conflict between God and the world and God and man. We think of the being, body-soul, as a natural unity and entity.

Comments:—"Crucify thy Flesh" was the demand of the ascetic Christian ethics of decadence, which overlooked that at the same time the mind was crucified. For in a sick and tortured flesh dwells a sick or tortured mind. *In the National Socialist State this dualistic Christian anthropology is completely out of date.* Whoever seeks to weed out the inferior and cultivate the gifted and the best of our inheritance, whoever seeks a Social-Aristocracy can be no longer Christian. For Christianity is the religious form of Social Democracy. Both are international, democratic and believing in human equality.

Thesis 13.—The living world is the Womb-Mother of the high human mind. Knowing Being and Mind is a birth of the All-Mother. The mother-child thought is hence the right indication of the God-world secret. We speak in a modern Nature religion of the Mind-Child God who rests in the All-Mother.

Thesis 14.—The feelings of union, holiness and blessedness are the basic religious feelings. *The Christian feelings of sin, guilt and repentance are not religious feelings at all.* They are artificially engendered complexes in Man.

Thesis 15.—*The ethics of the German Religion condemns all belief in inherited sin, as well as the Jewish-Christian teaching of a fallen world and man.* Such a teaching is not only non-Germanic and non-German, it is immoral and non-religious. Whoever preaches this menaces the morality of the people.

Thesis 16.—Whoever forgives sin, sanctions sin. The forgiving of sins undermines religious ethics and destroys the morale of the people.

Thesis 17.—At the heart of the German religious ethics stands concern for the welfare of people and Fatherland, not for the blessedness of the individual. *The German ethics is not one for salvation of the*

individual like the Christian ethics but one for the welfare of the people as a whole.

Comments:--The National Socialist ethics rightly fights individualism and egoism and educates for the care of the community, the people and the Fatherland, to the absorption of all our thought....This concern about the salvation of the Community is expressed in the National Socialist ethic: 'Thou art nothing, thy people is everything!' The Christian ethic is the exact opposite: 'Thou and thy eternal salvation are everything and thy people is nothing!' For international and pacifist Christian ethics has never yet recognised the interest of the people.... *National Socialist and Christian ethics are irreconcilable contradictions.*

Thesis 18.—He who belongs to the German religion is a slave of God, but lord of the divine within him. German ethics therefore rejects making Man passive for receiving grace, as non-German.

Thesis 19.—In the German religion there is no escape from life, but only release into life. For it the statement is valid: Whoever loves man heals him before he is born, not before he dies. The genuine Saviour turns his care towards prenatal Man.

Thesis 20.—The Ethics of the German religion is a heroic ethics. It rests on three ancient German virtues: Bravery, chivalry and fidelity, all of which spring out of honour!

Thesis 21.—We of the German Religion demand the introduction of religious instruction in the schools. Christian instruction can no longer be regarded as adequate or valid, since Christianity is in our sense (*see* Theses 1, 2, and 3) no longer a religion.

Comments:—The age of world-religions draws

to a close. A people which has returned to its blood and soil, which has realised the danger of international Jewry, can no longer tolerate a religion in its churches which make the scriptures of the Jews the basis of its Gospel. Germania cannot be rebuilt on this inner lie......We must base ourselves on the Holy Scriptures which are clearly written in German hearts......*Our cry is: Away from Rome and Jerusalem: Back to our native German Faith in its present-day form.*

What is sacred is our home (*Heimat*),

What is eternal is our people,

What is divine is what we want to be.

Thesis 22.—We of the German religion construe the Divine in images true to life—a manly-heroic and a woman-motherly.

Thesis 23.—One of the two religious forms of the German Religion is the Nordic Light-Hero as the embodiment of heroic manliness. The Nordic Light-Hero is the image of the high human Mind and of the heroic and helping Leader, which goes struggling and triumphant ahead as the Moral Ideal of his people.

Thesis 24.—The Mother with the Child is the truest, most loving, sacred and happiness-bringing of all the symbols of the world and life. The Mother Figure is the original religious figure from which indeed the God-Father figure derives its splendour. In the German Church there must be alongside the manly heroic figure the dear and faithful picture of the most-blessed Mother, if the Church is to rest on the laws of life of a people's Church.

Thesis 25.—The cult-forms of the German religion and of the German People's Church must

adapt themselves to the living laws of thought which underlie them. The life of the family, of the State, and of the whole nation must be reflected in a natural way in these cult-forms of the Church, if the Church is to be a modern People's Church with life flowing through it.

THE ORTHODOX REACTION

As the formidable and devastating anti-Christian flood rolls ahead, sweeping off Christianity in all countries, uneasiness, alarm and consternation spread in Christian ranks. Official Christianity is throwing in her last reserves in an attempt to turn the tide. Desperate and exasperated, she is trying every means she can lay her hands upon, however disparaging they may otherwise be to the genuine spirit and teaching of the Bible. She is building up a two-fold line of defence and has divided her forces accordingly into two groups.

One group, consisting of the best brains among the clergy is attempting to rationalise Christianity by weeding out all that is objectionable, which, though it may temporarily succeed in deceiving people, actually ends in the virtual negation of Christian verities and consequently meets with the reprobation of the more consistent and less enlightened section of priesthood. According to the representatives of this advanced group,[1] "our belief in Jesus Christ must be based upon moral conviction, not upon physical wonder." And again: "the time is past when Christianity could be presented as a revelation attested by miracles......We must accept Christianity, not on the ground of the miracles, but in

1 The Right Rev. W. Boyd Carpenter: *An Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures*, p. 132.

spite of them,......There has been no special intervention of the Divine Will contrary to the natural order of things." And yet again, according to Archdeacon Wilson, "we dare not deny the name of Christian to such as live in Christ's spirit and do His will, though they know not for certain how God manifested Himself in Christ, and will not profess a certainty they do not feel......We rest on the broad ground of the vast experience of the world, and the testimony of our own conscience, that Christ has lifted mankind up, and shown man what is good; and this we may describe as bringing man to God, and revealing God to man. This redemption, salvation, we acknowledge as a fact. He who has faith in Christ, and lets it work its natural result in making him more like Christ, deserves to be called a Christian."

The other group, however, regards a radical change in the Christian doctrines as impious and inconsistent with its alleged divine character. Its representatives resort therefore to reforming the technique of church-life and seem to think that by pandering to the tastes of the common masses, by transforming the churches into cinema halls and social clubs and by making the whole church-business more business-like they can arrest the progress of the anti-Christian force.

Methods of the Orthodox

Let us take, for example, the 'most Christian' country, the native land of Dr. S. M. Zwemer, D.B. Macdonald and Rev. Cash, I mean, the United States of America. The editor of the *Boston Herald*, while expressing his nervousness at the inefficiency of the clergy, appealed to them to study the art of advertising so as to enable themselves to 'sell' Christianity better to the public. He said:

"We do know that the advertising business is

attracting many able young men, for it is a growing business and increasingly influential. We hear that everything must be 'sold' these days. The President has to 'sell' his policies; the colleges have to 'sell' their instruction; art has to 'sell' its creations; not only do merchants have to sell their wares, some of the finest and cleanest philanthropic enterprises in the world are experts in advertising. Why not apply the idea to the sermon? Preachers must 'sweat' blood in the produce of good sermons, then sell them to the public."

Needless to say, the appeal met with a hearty response. The Church took to it with an enthusiasm which few could imagine. Here is a typical advertisement:

"The following questions will be discussed Sunday evening by the Rev. William Elliot Hammon, Pastor of the Way Temple:

"What was the result of your personal interview with Fatty Arbuckle?

"Tell us what Arbuckle said when you asked him the secret of his reducing 80 pounds.

"Should girls with big feet be dentists?"[1]

The Rev. B.G. Hodge of Owensboro succeeded in attracting a large audience when he advertised in the local *Messenger* his Sabbath sermon:

"Solomon a six cylinder sport! Could you handle as many wives and concubines as this 'Old Bird'? Rev. B.G. Hodge will proceed on this subject Sunday night at Seattle Memorial. You are welcome".[2]

1 *Americana*, p. 269.

2 *Americana*, p. 65.

The Rev. Griffin went a step further:

"Griffin, Pastor of the Rogers Park Baptist Church, Hilldale and Greenleaf Avenues, exhibited five types of girls to his audience. His subject was 'The kind of girl to marry'. Each one of the young women stepped into a framework of flowers and tissue-paper lattice-work which had been arranged in the front of the Church over the baptistry, while a spotlight was turned on."[1]

The Rev. Karl A. Blackman, Associate Minister of Linwood Christian Church, Kansas City, Missouri, reported[2]:—

"I've got to get them some way, and my ways seem to be right, for they come in thousands to my Happy Sundays.

"At three in the afternoon we let down a screen across the top of the church and have moving pictures—the best moving pictures we can have for young children.

"Waifs and strays come into the church in hundreds. They make an awful mess in the church. Two bushel baskets of rubbish, popcorn, peanut husks, chewing gum, and all sorts of things, are carried away after these children have been there.

"Then at 5.30 we have another movie picture show for the whole congregation and we get good pictures too. Douglas Fairbanks doing his stuff, or something given rise to by the film.

"*And you have to get hold of those young people with your first sentence, or they would soon leave the Church, contented with having seen a good film.*

1 Americana, p. 106.

2 *The Evening News*, London, Feb. 19, 1927.

You've got to shake off the effects of the film right there.

"I snap it right out at them quick, fast, one, two, three, and so on, have them thinking.

"Then, on the stroke of seven we have another service that is sent out by a radio. It is the young people's forum. Everybody is free to get up and say what they like for two minutes. We start right off the mark, and if President Coolidge was going to speak there and was ten seconds late, well he'd just be late, that's all.

"*The lights are subdued a little, so that boys and girls can behave as is natural to boys and girls, but I keep a fatherly eye on all of them.*

"I have a quiet little room with a soft light and there I receive young people who have troubles to get off their chests and want advice. Each received alone.

"Some are girls who are a little faded and want to know why it is that men don't keep running after them like they do other girls. I cheer them up and tell them to put their clothes on better, or advise them of something that will bring their personality more to the front.

"Yes, sir, my methods are popular."

What a wonderful conception of religious life! What a marvellous remedy for irreligion!!

ORTHODOX APOLOGETICS: THE BEGINNING

To come to the other group now—the group of interpreters, rationalisers and apologists: The following are a few instances of the new interpretation, especially with regard to the miraculous element in Christianity:—

In his book on *Holy Scripture and Criticism*, Bishop Ryle observes: "Think of the use made of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Apostles in the Acts, or by St. Paul in his Epistles. It is ever the spiritual and moral lesson[1]......In His incidental references to Moses, He (*i.e.*, Jesus) adopts the language of the Scribes....He never displayed knowledge of facts which could not be possessed by those of His own time......To His intellectual powers in His humanity there seem to have been assigned the natural barriers of the time in which He lived."[2]

According to the Rev. A.B. Bruce[3], "while Christ's spiritual intuitions are pure truths valid for all ages, *His language concerning the Father shows*

1. The bishop is wrong. In the *Acts* as well as in Paul's *Epistles* it is ever the historical and predictive portions of the Jewish Scriptures that are appealed to.

2. What a damaging confession, And yet Jesus is regarded by the Christians as divine, as the 'Only Begotten Son' of God!!

3. *Encyc. Bib.*, art. "Jesus".

limitations of vision: His acts of healing were real, but it does not follow that they were miraculous."

Archdeacon Wilson in a paper read at the Diocesan Conference at Manchester on Oct. 22, 1903, observed: "What do we mean in our Creed when we say: 'He came down from heaven?' We explain away 'down' we explain away 'heaven' in the sense in which the word was originally used. What do we mean by 'descended into Hell', by 'sitteth on the right hand of God?'......Spiritual truths are spiritually discerned, and do not admit of final intellectual definitions. *We can only avert the rejection of theology by recognising its limitations.*"

Dr. Adolph Harnack, the famous German Biblical scholar, interprets the occurrence of miracles as the operation of natural law and says[1]: "Miracles, it is true, do not happen; but of the marvellous and the inexplicable there is no lack—*that the earth in its course stood still, that a she-ass spoke, that a storm was quieted by a sword, we do not believe, and we shall never believe*;[2] but that the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard, will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion."

Regarding the *Virgin-birth,* he says:[3] "The evangelists themselves never refer to it, nor make Jesus Himself refer to His antecedents. On the contrary, they tell us that Jesus' mother and His brethren were completely surprised at His coming forward, and did not know what to make of it. Paul, too, is silent; so that we can be sure that the oldest tradition knew nothing of any stories of Jesus' birth."

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1 *What is Christianity*? chap. "Miraculous Element."

2 Though the Christians have always unanimously believed in them on the authority of the Bible!

3 *What is Christianity*? p. 31.

The Rev. David Smith interprets the fundamental miracle of *Ascension* thus[1]: "When Jesus parted from the eleven on Olivet, *He did not forsake the earth and migrate to a distant Heaven.* He ceased to manifest Himself; but He is here at this hour no otherwise than during those forty days."

Bishop Henson regards the *Resurrection* as a spiritual fact only, and not a fact of the historical order: "Any candid Christian reading through the accounts of the New Testament evidences.... cannot escape the inference that *the evidence for the quasi-historical statement of the Creed is of a highly complicated, dubious and even contradictory character*.... Is an honest belief in the Resurrection really inconsistent with a *reverent agnosticism as to the historical circumstances* out of which in the first instance that belief arose?"[2]

Bishop Carpenter writes: "In *John* V we read that the stirring of the waters and the consequent healing virtue was attributed to the presence of an angel. The modern would speak of the pool as a medicinal spring. The fact is the same. The mode of description is different. The ancient knew little of what are called natural causes."[3]

The Ven. W.M. Sinclair, late Archdeacon of London, once conjectured: "When our Lord said: 'Greater works than these shall ye do', He was perhaps thinking of the marvellous discoveries of surgeons and physicians in times of advanced science."

The Rev. Samuel Cox is of the opinion that Joshua did not command the sun and the moon to stand still, but only "besought God that the black

1 *The Days of his Flesh.*

2 *The Hibert Journal*, April, 1904.

3 *An Introduction to the Study of the Scripture*, p. 51.

clouds of the storm driving up the pass from the sea might not be allowed to blot out the sun and bring night prematurely before his victory was complete."[1]

Again, as regards the *rainbow covenant*, "it is not meant that the rainbow appeared for the first time to Noah after the Flood,[2] but that it was adopted then as a visible sign of God's covenant, as water is adopted for a somewhat similar covenant in the New Testament."[3]

Bishop Westcott says regarding the fulfilment of *prayers*[4]: "It would be positively immoral for us now to pray that the tides or the sun should not rise on a particular day; but, as long as the idea of the physical law which ruled them was unformed or indistinct, the prayer would have been reasonable, and (may we not hope?) the fulfilment also."

Canon J.M. Wilson virtually denies the fundamental Christian dogma of the *Fall of Adam:* "Man fell, according to science, when he first became conscious of the conflict of freedom and conscience; and each individual man falls as his ancestor fell. *I do not mean to say that there is a particular moment at which man fell; it is not so.* It is a continuous struggle of good and evil. I see in this nothing to conflict with a legitimate interpretation of the *story of the Fall in the* third chapter of *Genesis.* Such a narrative is not illusion, still less a mere fiction; it is, as all teaching of spiritual truth must be, a *temporary* and figurative mode of expression."[5]

This brief account of the *individual* efforts of orthodox apologists gives us the story of the first

1 Quoted in *The Old Testament Difficulties*, p. 63.
2 Although this alone the Bible emphasises!
3 *The Old Testament Difficulties*, p. 41.
4 *Gospel of the Resurrection*, pp. 38, 39.
5 *Problems of Religion and Science*, p. 70.

shocks which Christianity received from some of its own representatives. The very tone of the statements makes it transparently clear that they do not harmonise with the express teachings of the Bible and the traditional Christian belief, and that they were made to save an awkward situation. Those, therefore, who prized their faith more than expediency, disowned the new interpretation and insisted on the correct Christian viewpoint in unambiguous terms. For instance, as regards miracles, Canon Mozley warned in his Bampton Lectures: "Miracles and the supernatural content of Christianity must stand or fall together." And Dean Farrar observed: "However skilfully the *modern ingenuity of semi-belief* may have tampered with supernatural interpositions, it is clear to every honest and unsophisticated mind that, if miracles be incredible, Christianity is false."[1]

There can be no doubt that logically this position is unassailable. But, as a bishop of London expressed at the beginning of the present century (1904), "the truth of the matter really is that all over Europe a great conflict is being fought between the old faith in a supernatural revelation and a growing disbelief in it". That disbelief has assumed gigantic proportions today, with the result that traditional Christianity is virtually dead except among the most backward and the most ignorant, and has been replaced by a faith which cannot be called Christianity any longer. This 'Reformed Christianity' is the outcome of the apologists' window-dressing. How far they will succeed in regaining the lost ground for Christianity, remains to be seen. Those who approach the problem with an impartial attitude will see that such a drastic recasting and reforming of Christianity which her defenders have undertaken is a proof by itself that Christianity is false. In fact, once the historical and textual criticism of the Bible is accepted, the whole case for Christianity collapses

1 *Witness of History to Christ*, p. 25.

automatically. If the Bible is the Word of God, its historical authenticity must be unimpeachable and all its teachings must be acceptable. We must either accept Christianity as a whole or reject it as a whole. That is what every honest Christian has believed throughout the past two thousand years. That is what the unsophisticated Christian believes still. But those professional representatives of Christianity who know things better and can see the sore spots of their religion clearly cannot take the same stand. The problem before them seems to be one of prestige rather than of faith. They naturally care more for the name than for the content. A brief survey of their organised efforts may now be given.

MODERNISM IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

Among the organised reformist movements, the activities of the Modern Churchmen of England have resulted in reforms of basic importance. They started with the idea of bringing about "a clean sweep of all those factors whereby Christianity had become heathenised" and regarded this as the sole method of saving Christianity.

The first important event occurred on July 5, 1917, when the revealed nature of the Bible was attacked in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, and it was decided in the very presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury that the Bible was not the pure Word of God and that many events mentioned in it were unbelievable. The speakers went even so far as to assert that if Jesus believed in the unbelievable legends of the Bible, he must be said to have shared the wrong beliefs of his contemporaries. They said, for instance, they could not believe in the story of Jonah's fish, though according to Matthew XII, 39, 40, Jesus decidedly believed in it.

It was an extremely important step inasmuch as it revealed to the general public the mind of the clergy themselves, who, it seems, had long ago lost

all faith in several teachings of the Bible. Before that memorable day, every deacon, at the time of his ordination, had to declare his belief in the Bible as the Word of God, the question put to him being: "Do you unfeignedly believe all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?" The prescribed reply used to be: "I do so believe them." The Church authorities were now compelled to change the question by adding conscience-saving clauses. This is the new form adopted: "Do you unfeignedly believe all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as conveying to us in many parts and in diverse manners the revelation of God which is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Did Christ found the Church?" was the question discussed at the Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Girton College, Cambridge, on August 9, 1917. Professor Percy Gardner presided, and the following persons participated in the debate: Dean Inge of St. Paul's, the Rev. J.R. Wilkinson, the Rev. C.W. Emmet, Bishop Mercer, the Rev. H.A. Major, the Rev. L. Patterson, the Rev. F. Mann, the Rev. H. Symonds and Archdeacon Ford.

The Rev. J.R. Wilkinson opened the discussion and Dean Inge read a paper in which he proved that Jesus was not the founder, and that, on the contrary, he was a follower of the Mosaic Dispensation, "a Jew like other Jews, a Rabbi like other Rabbis". The founder of the Church, according to the learned Dean, was St. Paul, who "made a Greek god of a Hebrew Prophet". This view was endorsed by all those present, with the single exception of Archdeacon Ford.[1]

Another theological bombshell was thrown on the Church-creed in August, 1921, when Dr. Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, while discussing the

1 *The Times*, London, August 10, 1917.

problem of the divinity and sonship of Jesus before the Modern Churchmen's Congress held at Cambridge, remarked:

"*Jesus did not claim divinity for himself.* He may have allowed himself to be called a Messiah, but never in any critically well-attested sayings is there anything which suggests that his conscious relation to God is other than that of a man towards God. The speeches of the fourth Gospel, where they go beyond the synoptic conception cannot be regarded as history.

"It follows from this admission that *Jesus was in the fullest sense a man, and that he had not merely a human body, but a human soul, intellect and will.*

"It is equally unorthodox to suppose that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed. There is simply no basis for such a doctrine unless we say that all human souls exist before their birth into the world, but that is not the usually accepted Catholic position.

"*The divinity of Christ does not necessarily imply virgin-birth or any other miracle.* The virgin-birth, if it could be historically proved, would be no demonstration of Christ's divinity; nor would the disproof of it throw any doubt on that doctrine.

"*The divinity of Christ does not imply omniscience. There is no more reason for supposing that Jesus of Nazareth knew more than his contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of mental diseases which current belief attributed to diabolic possession than that he knew more about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms. It is difficult to deny that he entertained some expectations about the future which history has not verified.*"

The Rev. H.D.A. Major, Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, endorsed the views of the Dean in

these words:

"It should be clearly realised that Jesus did not claim in the Gospels to be the Son of God in a physical sense, such as the narratives of the virgin-birth suggest, nor did he claim to be the Son of God in a metaphysical sense, such as was required by the Nicene Theology. *He claimed to be God's son in a moral sense, in the sense in which all human beings are sons of God* as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God and capable of acting on those moral principles on which God acts."

The intensity of the shock which the truly orthodox Christians received can be realised from the following comment:[1]

"During the last few days orthodox Christianity has received the greatest blow it has suffered for many years. Outside the Church, scores of people, learned and skilled in the ways of theology, have been attempting to prove that the basis of Christianity was all wrong and that modern science had destroyed its very foundation. This time a blow has come from the inside itself; and three highly placed theologians, all avowed members of the Church of England in which they live, preach and have their being have united to use words which laymen take to mean that Christ was not the son of God, but a Palestine Jew.

"Now what Renan argued in *The Life of Jesus*, what all scientists outside the faith have expressed in learned tones, has been suddenly put into a bomb which, thrown at the Modern Churchmen's Congress at Cambridge not a week ago, has staggered the Anglican Church so much that the reverberations of the shock will be felt for years.... Dr. Rashdall, the Dean of Carlisle, Dr. Bethune

1 *The Graphic*, Aug. 20, 1921.

Baker, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, the Rev. R. G. Parsons of Rushlowe, have stood by at an Anglican Conference, and—if their words have been reported rightly—denied the Godhead..

"Christ was not divine but human, said Dr. Rashdall. 'I do not for a moment suppose that Christ ever thought of himself as God,' said Dr. Bethune Baker. 'Jesus was a man, genuinely, utterly, completely, unreservedly human,' said the Rev. R.G. Parsons, 'a Palestine Jew who expressed himself through the conditions and limitations of life and thought peculiar to his own time.'

"These three men are not people whose opinions can be disregarded even by the most orthodox of all Christians. They are men of the highest intellectual attainments, men of brilliant achievements in the world of theology; all of these men, who as lecturers and fellows and professors, have instructed scores of Anglican divines before their ordination and since."

In a lecture delivered at a meeting of the Association of University Women Teachers, held at the University College, London, in 1922, Canon Barnes made certain observations regarding the educational value of the Bible which, coming from such a high official of the Church, should prove an eye-opener for us all. He said:

"In this connection it is most important that the true nature and value of the Old Testament should be explained to children. It is Jewish literature, and is valuable for us mainly because it shows how the Jewish prophets were led to the idea of God, which Jesus accepted and emphasised, and because in it vague expectations of a Messiah foreshadow the advent of Christ. But *in the Old Testament are also to be found folk-lore, defective history, half-savage morality, obsolete forms of worship based upon*

*primitive and erroneous ideas of the nature of God, and crude science.*The whole, however, is valuable as showing the growth of a pure monotheism among the Jews—a religious phenomenon as remarkable and inexplicable as the great intellectual development of the golden age of Greece. It is very difficult to convey truths like this to children, and so it seems to me better to postpone the Old Testament part of the religious teaching to the later stages; *otherwise children would learn stories like that with which the Book of Genesis opened, which they would afterwards discover to be untrue.*"

He further said that he had "come reluctantly to the conclusion that *it is highly dangerous to use, for didactic purposes, such allegories as the creation of woman, the Daniel stories, and Jonah; it encourages the prevalent belief that religious people have a low standard of truth.*"[1]

The attitude of Modern Churchmen towards the problems arising from the conflict of Christianity and science was ably presented by Dean Inge in an essay written by him in 1925 for a book entitled *Religion, Science and Reality.* He said:

"The discovery that the earth, instead of being a finite universe like a dish with a dish-cover over it, is a planet revolving round the sun, which itself is only one of millions of stars, tore into shreds the Christian map of the universe.

"Until that time the ordinary man, whether educated or uneducated, had pictured the sum of things as a three-storeyed building consisting of: heaven, the abode of God, the angels and beautified

1 But if, as this learned clergyman says, the Book of Genesis is unreliable and untrue, the story of the temptation of Eve by the devil and the subsequent fall of Adam, on which the Christian dogma of the Original Sin has been built, becomes untrustworthy. This would mean the very negation of Christianity, because thus the doctrine of Atonement, which rests on the dogma of the Original Sin, collapses automatically!

spirits; our earth; and the infernal regions, where the devil, his angels and lost souls are imprisoned and tormented......Most certainly heaven and hell were geographical expressions.

"The articles in the Creeds on the descent of Christ into Hades, and His ascent into heaven, affirm no less; and it is obvious that the bodily resurrection of Christ is intimately connected with the bodily ascension. The new cosmography thus touched the faith of the Creeds very closely.

"That the Church interpreted these doctrines literally is shown by the Anglican Articles of Religion which declare that Christ ascended into heaven with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, and there sitteth. Transubstantiation was denied on the ground that the body of Christ is in heaven, and that it is contrary to the properties of a natural body to be in more than one place at the same time.

"The Copernican astronomy, and all the knowledge about the heavens which has been built on this foundation, leave no room for a geographical heaven.

"Space seems to be infinite, and among all the stars, planets, satellites and nebulae which are sparsely scattered over its vast empty distances we can hardly imagine that one has been chosen as the abode of the Creator and the site of the heavenly Jerusalem. The belief in a subterranean place of punishment, which has not been disproved by astronomy, seems to have faded away without making any commotion, though I am told that the law of the land is still committed to it......

"The older problem, however, is still shirked. A short time ago I reviewed a book by a writer whom a popular vote would probably choose as our

foremost theologian. I found there a statement that Christians are no longer expected to believe in a local heaven above our heads. I welcomed this rejection of a geographical heaven as significant, coming as it did from a pillar of orthodoxy......Another distinguished theologian, in discussing the ascension of Christ, said that the words 'into heaven' might be taken symbolically, but that we must believe that the physical body of Christ was raised to a considerable distance above the ground. I do ask with all possible earnestness: Is this kind of shuffling any longer tolerable? Is it not essential that the Church should face this problem, which for four hundred years it has kept at arm's length? Do Christians accept those verdicts of astronomical science which seem to be surely established, with those modifications of traditional theology which they imply, or do they not? To juggle with words "letting I dare not wait, I would, can satisfy nobody."

At the Modern Churchmen's Conference held at Oxford on August 26, 1925, the Vicar of Partington questioned the received interpretation of such Christian verities as the Fall of Adam, the Original Sin, and the Atonement, and his views were heartily endorsed by many. Simultaneously Dr. Barnes proved in an enlightening sermon that most of the Christian rites had been incorporated from Paganism and that the sacrament was in particular borrowed from the mysteries of sun-worshippers.

This brief survey of the reforms adopted between 1915 and 1925 may be concluded with the following enlightening summary given in the editorial article of *The Modern Churchman* (July, 1927):—

"Modernism has been destructive, not willingly, but of necessity. It has had, like the prophets of old, to protest against false teaching by Christian teachers, false teaching which was destroying the influence of Christianity with thoughtful and sensitive

souls. Modernism in the person of F.D. Maurice began by protesting against the terrible doctrine of everlasting torment as presenting an utterly untrue view of God the Father; in Colenso it protested against the assertion of the scientific accuracy of Genesis as bound to alienate the scientific world from Christianity; it denied the doctrine of original sin as due to Adam's transgression and as the cause of physical death; it denied, in the light of Biblical criticism, the historicity of many Old Testament and New Testament narratives; it denied the resurrection of the flesh and the trustworthy character of Jewish apocalyptic picture portraying the future history of humanity on this planet and the end of the world; it denied the penal character of Christ's sufferings and that he offered on the Cross a propitiation or satisfaction to God the Father; it denied our Lord's omniscience and omnipotence while subject to the conditions of his incarnate life; it denied his virgin-birth and physical resurrection and ascension; it denied that there was any specific authority for the monarchical episcopate; it denied that the gift of tongues bestowed the power to speak foreign languages; it denied the evidential value of miracles and that they were capable of attesting a divine revelation; it denied Biblical and ecclesiastical infallibility. To-day, traditional Christianity, with its scheme of salvation, lies shattered; it has lost intellectual authority with all classes. The Modernists are not to blame for this: the scientists, the historians, the Biblical critics, the metaphysicians, psychologists, and anthropologists are most to blame. The Modernists have but accepted their assertions and repeated them; *and this they did not only in the interests of truth, but also, as they believed, in the interests of Christianity*. Not only were they convinced that no lie is of the truth, but they were also convinced that Christianity ought frankly to abandon every form of untruth and amputate it from its teachings, however painful the operation might prove, being well assured that as

Christianity got rid of every form of falsehood and error, so it would become more influential for good. However, the result of all this denial is to give the impression that Modernism is destructive. The charge is a half-truth. This gives the impression that the only Christianity Modernism can offer is a reduced Christianity—that irreducible minimum which remains after science and criticism and metaphysics have done their uttermost to eliminate lies and legends. Now the great task of the Modernist is to substitute for a reduced Christianity a transformed Christianity."

This frank and fearless statement establishes two important facts: (1) that traditional Christianity, with its fundamentals like the Infallibility of the Bible, the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus, the Original Sin, the Vicarious Atonement, etc., is false and cannot be accepted as giving us the original message of the holy prophet Jesus; (2) that a transformed Christianity alone can resolve the present religious crisis in Christendom.

As regards the first contention, it is in full agreement, in principle and in fundamental details, with Islam. The only point of dispute, which separates the Modern Churchmen from Islam, arises in the second contention. The Modernists seem to hold that it would be possible by human effort to build up a transformed Christianity which will meet the needs of humanity. Islam, on the other hand, holds that true religion should come from God and not from man, and that, therefore, the substitution of one man-made religion by another cannot help us at all. It further holds that once the necessity of Divine Revelation is admitted, it would be irrational to believe that the All-Merciful God, Who had revealed His Message to Jesus, should have allowed humanity to grope in darkness after that Message had been corrupted by human hands. On this argument the Qur'an builds its claim that it is in Islam, and Islam alone, that a Christian should seek

to get the required "transformed Christianity'—'transformed' in the sense of 'genuine'. The sooner the advanced forces of Christendom realise this rational truth, the better for them and for the world of religion at large.

However, the idea of building up a transformed Christianity has caught the fancy of Christendom today, and this in itself constitutes a happy sign. It may not by itself succeed in leading the modernists to the ultimate truth, but it will certainly continue to take them away from falsehood and error. At the present moment they are moving fast towards a revitalised and reformed Quaker mysticism and hope to find there the original message of Jesus in individual religious experience. So says one of their greatest leaders, the Very Rev. Dr. Inge: "The strength of Protestantism lies not in theories of inspiration and special providence; it lies in personal devotion to Christ, and in the duty of individual judgment, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. Institutionalism may be decaying, and there are at present few signs of a revival of it; but *personal religion* may even gain by the decline of authority and ecclesiastical discipline; and it is in personal religion[1] that the Christian recovers the faith of the original Gospel, and an unassailable basis for confronting the problems of the future."[2] "I am convinced that the Quaker type of belief and practice will be of great and increasing importance in what remains of the twentieth century......I do not hesitate to say that in my judgement the Quakers are the truest Christians in the modern world."[3] "*It is certain that the Gospel of Christ levels all institutional barriers, whether sacred or secular, by ignoring them. Faith and love are the only sufficient passports to membership of the 'little flock'.*"[4]

1 Contrast it with Kalhoff's view (*Rise of Christianity*): "What the religious person calls Christianity today, a religion of the individual, a personal healing principle, would have seemed folly to the early Christians."

2 *The Church in the World*, p. 26.

3 *Ibid.*, Preface, p. vii.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

This leads us to a brief examination of the teachings of Quakerism. Quakerism was and is a powerful revolt against all that Biblical Christianity has stood for, excepting the belief in Jesus as a saviour. It was always condemned by the Roman Catholics as well as the Protestants in the bitterest terms. One of the many charges brought against the Quakers was that of denying the historical Christ and conceiving him as the 'quickening Spirit' in their own souls. Richard Baxter in his 'Quaker's Catechism' (1657) accused the Quakers of denying that there is any such person as Jesus Christ who suffered at Jerusalem. John Bunyan likened them to the Ranters and Familists and said that they "either deny Christ to be a real man without (— outside) them, blasphemously fancying him to be only God manifested in their flesh, or else make his human nature, with the fullness of the Godhead in it, to be but a type of God manifested in the saints." These accusations were based on such statements of Quaker belief as that given by Penn: "That the outward person which suffered was properly the Son of God, we utterly deny."

The essence of Quakerism is that the seat of authority which Catholics find in the Church, and Protestants in the Bible, should be placed in the

enlightened human soul, and it emphasises that the inner light is sufficiently real, constant, and available to be a guide for the whole of a man's life. Thus it rises above all forms of traditional Christianity. Caroline Stephen, the well-known Quaker writer, says: "Our fundamental principle of obedience to the light of Christ in the heart......must, I believe, lead to the effacing of outlines and boundaries made by human hands......To subordinate, and if need be to sacrifice, whatever is outward and perishable to the innermost, the central and supreme, is the very groundwork of our ideal."[1] Thomas Hodgkin remarks: "What was spoken unscientifically in the childhood of the world by the unscientific Hebrew sages is no essential part of Christ's message to the world today."[2] The scientist Silvanus Thompson observes: "What is a Friend (— Quaker) but one who, illuminated by the quickening Spirit, has learned to cast off the incrustations which ignorance and intellectual pride or intellectual folly have during the centuries built up around the simple code of Christ's teaching."[3]

Quakerism has the distinct advantage over all other Christian sects inasmuch as, by throwing off the Infallible Church and the Infallible Bible, it takes refuge in the world of the individual and personal religious experience, and thus makes itself immune from all those attacks of scientific and historical criticism which have shattered traditional Christianity. And this is the reason why the clever Modernists try to take shelter in Quakerism. But they forget perhaps that in doing so they do not arrive at anything stable and unique. For, in the first place, to admit that the Bible is not a revealed scripture will do away with the Christian contention

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1 *Quaker Strongholds*, Preface to ed. of 1907.

2 Rufus Jones: *Later Periods of Quakerism*.

3 *Ibid.*

that Christianity is a divinely revealed religion and has therefore the authority to organise a religious community which should regard the rest of the world as infidel and heathen and should, consequently, create huge missionary organisations to Convert them. Secondly, what Lord Cromer wrongly said regarding Islam, may be rightly asserted regarding Christianity: "A reformed or transformed Christianity is Christianity no longer." Thirdly, even if it could be proved in some miraculous way that in the new mystical interpretation of Christianity the original teaching of Jesus has been fully restored, it will yet be insufficient to meet the religious needs of humanity. The scope of an individualistic personal mysticism is too narrow and its authority too arbitrary to give us an enduring basis of a religious Church. It is the Divine Revelation in the form of a well attested Message from God and not the subjective intuition of an erring human individual which can claim a universal authority over mankind. This is a truth which the Bible itself preaches, and all honest Christians would do well if they stick to it and make it their guiding principle.

MODERNISM IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dean Inge says:

"The main facts about the Modernist controversy are well-known. The group of men whom Pope Pius X called Modernists are, or were, some of them philosophers and some New Testament critics. In the latter capacity they tend to accept the extreme destructive position, holding with Loisy that *the historical Jesus was merely an enthusiastic prophet* who went about preaching that the 'Kingdom of God'—a supernatural cataclysm which would bring the world-order to an end—was at hand. All the supernatural elements in the Gospel narrative are either openly rejected or tacitly set aside. Albert Schweitzer's one-sided insistence on the so-called eschatological (apocalyptic) character of Christ's teaching has had a strong influence upon the Modernists. *The historical Jesus*, according to these critics, *founded no Church and instituted no Sacraments; the real founder of Catholicism was St. Paul, who inaugurated the cult of the Lord Christ (Kyrios Christos), and thereby gave the new religion a form which was intelligible to the Hellenistic population of the Roman Empire*. The Church grew, like any other organism by responding to its environment; it adapted itself to human needs and *gave scope for the unchanging popular religion of the Mediterranean*

peoples to find expression within its comprehensive system. Since religion is fundamentally 'irrational', it can easily survive the loss of its factual basis. The fatal error of Catholic theology has been the attempt to find a rationalistic foundation for the faith.

"That this treatment of the historical Founder of Christianity is 'deeply repulsive to the large majority of believers' is admitted by Baron von Hugel; but the more drastic Modernists maintain that it is, or soon will be forced upon us by honest criticism; and their anti-intellectualist philosophy helps them to face the crisis with equanimity. *Christianity, as Tyrrell said, is at the cross-roads.* The arguments from miracles and prophecy are gone. *The 'historical' articles in the Creeds are, for the Modernists, myth, not fact.* The claims of the Roman Church are buttressed by fraud. And lastly, the official philosophy, that of St. Thomas Aquinas, is quite out of date, being based on pre-conceptions which modern philosophy has rejected. Either, then, Catholicism must be abandoned, or it must justify itself by a new apologetic. Tyrrell, in a letter which he did not mean to be published, used the strong phrase, '*Catholicism must die to live.*'

"The Vatican made no terms with its dangerous defenders. Modernism was pronounced to be 'a compendium of all the heresies', and its theses were anathematised in detail......members of the school considered themselves deeply injured by being branded as heretics, and protested their loyalty and devotion to Catholicism."[1]

Professor Heiler of Germany

In spite of the repressive measures taken by the Vatican, Modernism has marched from triumph to triumph, with clear eye and confident step. It has

1 *The Church in the World*, pp. 28—30.

captured the strongest outposts of Catholic orthodoxy, and counts among its representatives many Catholic theologians of the highest merit, e.g., Alfred Loisy, Le Roy, Laberthonniere, George Tyrrell, Albert Schweitzer, Archbishop Soderblom, Baron Friedrich von Hugel and Professor Friedrich Heiler of Marburg.

The last-named scholar is regarded in Christendom as the most outstanding among the younger theologians of Germany, and his famous work, *Der Katholizismus,* in which he outlines a sketch of the whole history of Catholicism from the first century to the present day, is a comprehensive apology for Modernism. Professor Heiler was lately driven out of the Roman communion for his Modernist views. "The unflinching condemnation of Modernism by the Pope made it impossible for Heiler to remain a Catholic without denying his convictions and deserting his friends." He writes with burning indignation against the Pope's ideal of trying to kill the constructive reformative spirit of Modernism by a *coup de baton.*

The following is a brief summary of the fundamental Modernist teachings as stated by Professor Heiler in *Der Katholizismus:*—

"Jesus overcame the traditional religion, though without a formal breach." "He lays the axe to traditional Judaism" and "not less tears to pieces all exclusive Christian Churchmanship". "He is inwardly indifferent to every Church-ideal."

"*Salvation* (in the Gospel) lies alone in faith, hope, and love: faith in God's mercy, hope in the eternal kingdom, and self-sacrificing love. These are *not bound up with institutional religion;* they make their own way to the kingdom of heaven."

"*Inwardness and brotherly love break down all*

the barriers of legal and ritual Church-religion." "The Gospel is superecclesiastical and unecclesiastical. His judgment on the Jewish Church is valid also against the Christian Church of the later centuries." "*The use of the word ecclesia in St. Matthew is unhistorical; Jesus can never have said this.*" (*Matt. xci*, 18). "The words about binding and loosing have been transferred from another context." "Jesus gave no primacy or privileged position to any of His apostles." "The commission of primacy to Peter is plainly an interpolation."

"The Gospel of Christ and the Roman World-Church are united by no inner bond; a gulf yawns between them." "The Catholicising of Christianity begins immediately after the death of Jesus. The Pentecost is the birthday of the Catholic World-Church; *not the man Jesus but the Kyrios Christos and His Spirit founded the universal Church.*"

"*The system of Catholic dogma has its root in the Pauline myth (— symbolical narrative) of the Son of God.*" St. Paul also introduced "the Orphic-Platonic piety" into Christianity. He "lived in the higher world of the Spirit, the world of mystical inwardness." "The whole Christ-drama of salvation passes into this mystical inner life." *Mystical, rather than the historical aspect of the revelation, should be the ideal: " though we have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth we know Him so no more*". (2 *Cor.* V:16).

The fourth evangelist, St. John, who was "neither a missionary nor an ecclesiastic" but a "mystical theologian", and whose outlook was pervaded by the "native air" of the neo-Platonic "Alexandrian religious world", showed a better understanding of Christianity than others. "The dogma of the incarnation is the great *creation* of this writer"; for the rest, his Gospel of love is the genuine Gospel of Christ.

The spirit of the Gospel of Matthew and the Pastoral Epistles is different. "The Pastoral Epistles are the first document of narrow and stiff Roman Churchmanship." The First Gospel is greatly responsible for converting the mystical vision of the Kingdom of God into a legal ecclesiastical system. "The Apocalypse is the first document of the Catholic vulgar religion." "Old Oriental cosmology, Jewish eschatology, Chaldaean astrology, Assyrian number-symbolism, Hellenistic magic and Sibylline prophecy, Persian dualism and Christian belief in redemption, are here thrown together in a chaotic syncretism."

The Christian Church was rapidly *paganised* after the conversion of Constantine. "*The whole ancient piety, with its magical Beings, its cult of gods and heroes, its fear of demons and its belief in miracles, clothed itself with a thin Christian dress and so found entrance into the consecrated precincts of the Church.*" "The expiring heathen temple-liturgies took a new life within the Church, and brought its rites nearer to the old worship of the temples." "German heathenism, Aristotelian logic and metaphysics, and the mysticism of Dionysius the Areopagite, are the new factors which the medieval Church took into its bosom." "The combination of these heterogeneous elements makes it Catholic, and has enabled it to endure during all the centuries." "Catholicism has proclaimed the whole gay congeries of religions, which it embraces, as genuinely Christian."

Professor Heiler's view of the life of Jesus as a symbolical narrative—a *myth*— his mystical interpretation of the Christian Gospel in general, and his critical conclusion that institutional Christianity, wherever and in whatever form it may be found, is a pagan survival, leads him ultimately to base his belief on "facts of faith". For him religion is a thoroughly irrational affair in all its aspects. He endorses heartily the condemnation of rational

outlook contained in the following letter which Pope Gregory IX wrote to the Professors of the University of Paris in 1223. "Some of you distended like a bladder with the spirit of vanity, busy themselves in altering the limits laid down by the fathers with profane innovations......inclining to the teachings of natural philosophers. Misled by various and strange doctrines, they put the head where the tail ought to be, and for the queen to serve the maid-servant. And while they endeavour to buttress the faith by natural reason more than they ought, do they not render it, in a manner, useless and empty?......teach theological purity without the ferment of worldly science, not contaminating the word of God with the figments of philosophers."

"Tyrrell," observes a great Protestant Modernist, "was right in saying that the Church of Rome stands at the cross-roads. It is encumbered by an immense mass of falsified history and antiquated science, which it cannot repudiate, and which it can no longer impose upon its adherents, except where its priests still control and stifle education. The plea that truths of fact and truths of faith are different things, which do not conflict because they are on different planes, certainly suggests a way out. It is a way which would lead the Roman Church to disaster; but perhaps no other solution of the problem is in sight."

Professor Loisy of France

Professor Loisy, formerly Abbe Alfred Loisy, is the most outstanding representative of Modernism in France. Second to none in the authority derived from learning, he has been ranked for the greater part of his life as one of the foremost theologians of the Catholic Church. He devoted nearly thirty years to the problems connected with Biblical criticism and his work in that field is a masterpiece of

erudition and scholarship[1]. The research was undertaken in a spirit of defending the orthodox position against the adversely disposed Biblical critics, but ended in a total rejection of orthodoxy. The Vatican subsequently turned him out of the Roman communion and he became a lay professor.

Loisy's final conclusions regarding Christianity, which he bases on the textual criticism of the Bible, are both interesting and instructive. He regards the Biblical Jesus as the last of a series of Jewish Messianic agitators as, for instance, Judas the Galilean and the prophet Theudas. Somewhere between the years 26 and 36 of the Christian era, Jesus "began to proclaim the coming of God. After preaching for a while in Galilee, where he enlisted only a few followers, he came to Jerusalem for Easter, and there all he succeeded in accomplishing was to get condemned to death on the cross, like any common agitator, by the Procurator, Pontius Pilate."[2]

For Loisy, the greater part of the Passion story, on which the superstructure of Christianity has been built, is mythological: "The Gospels do not relate the death of Jesus. They relate the myth of salvation realised by his death, perpetuated in a way by the Christian Eucharist, emphatically commemorated and renewed in the Easter Festival. The Christian myth is without doubt related to the other salvation myths. It is by no mere chance that the resurrection of Christ on the third day after his death coincides with the ritual of the Feast of Adonis. The Barabbas incident, the burial by Joseph of Arimathaca, the discovery of the empty grave, are apologetic fictions. The incident of the two thieves crucified with Jesus may well be of the same order. And there is no reason why their invention should not have been facilitated or suggested in one way or another by

1 Couchoud: *The Enigma of Jesus*, p. 65.

2 A. Loisy: *Les Premieres Annees du Christianisme*, "Rev. d'Hist. et de Litt. Relig.", 1920, p. 162.

mythologies of surrounding countries."[1] As regards the Jesus-legend taken as a whole: "There is no actual consistency in the Gospel story, save the crucifixion of Jesus, condemned by Pontius Pilate as a Messianic agitator."[2]

Loisy regards the fourth Gospel as devoid of any historical value. It is only symbolical and presents a mystical vision. "The author never knew Jesus, save as the liturgical Christ, the object of Christian worship......These fragments of divine biography create no impression of reality."[3] He thus sums up the final results of his Biblical researches: "Direct criticism of the Gospel legend shows the gradual growth of that naive, incoherent epic, so frankly bold in its inventions, which we know as the Four Gospels. In the beginning, a few rather meagre recollections, arranged in the traditional manner and made to accord with the style of the Old Testament; and then miracles......of which the best that can be said is that they are in the taste of the age, and that they probably resemble those attributed to Jesus in his lifetime, or better still, that the majority, if not all, were understood as concrete symbols of the spiritual work of Jesus—many incidents intended to relieve the narrative, or more especially to fulfil prophecies, or merely inserted with an apologetic intent; the whole more or less co-ordinated with the ritual commemorating the Messianic Epiphany and salvation through Christ."[4]

1 *La Passion de Marduk*, "Rev. d'Hist. et de Litt. Relig.", 1922, p. 297.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Le quatrieme Evangile*, 2nd ed., pp. 56, 57.

4 *De la Methode en histoire des religions*, "Rev. d'Hist. et de Litt. Relig.", 1922, p. 35.

DOCTRINE IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

There are Christians who still deny that anything is wrong with traditional Christianity. They regard the Modernist views as representing the ideas of a few isolated heretics and feel safe in believing that the storm will pass off. The Christian missionaries who come to Asia and Africa to convert the "heathen", are particularly advocates of this view. However, either they are sadly mistaken or they conceal facts deliberately. The present theological unrest is too deep-seated to be regarded as mere heresy. It has permeated the whole fabric of Christianity and has shaken it to its foundations. Evidence to this effect can be multiplied *ad infinitum*.

Take for instance the case of one of the progressive and comparatively more enlightened orthodox Churches, namely, the Church of England. I have already stated the apologetics as developed up to the year 1925. Here I shall attempt to review the position as it exists to-day. Lest I be accused of distorting the facts deliberately—and such accusation is the first weapon which the Christian missionaries employ against their critics—I shall quote a member of the Church of England itself: "Crude and cruel conceptions[1] of religion," he says, "are still held ......and are believed to be justified by literal

1 Some of these conceptions are : Original Sin, Vicarious Atonement, Resurrection of Jesus, anthropomorphic notion of Sonship, physical character of heaven and hell.

interpretations of biblical texts. *Insistence upon the acceptance of such doctrines, even though they are expressed in the articles of belief and the creeds, is, however, not now regarded as essential for admission to the Church of England:* and it is permitted to attach symbolic or metaphorical meanings to words used by Christ, St. Paul and other Apostles, and the expositions of early Christian Fathers. *The tendency among the enlightened leaders of the Church of England is to ask for nothing more than belief in a Supreme Being who created the universe, established laws which rule it, and watches the evolution of man upon the earth*......Most modern Churchmen now, however, are disposed to follow the Bishop of Birmingham when he says that he does not consider the Virgin Birth essential to the doctrine of Incarnation, which simply teaches that God revealed Himself in human form in Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian Church never actually said that Jesus was God; and, as evidence that He was not so thought, many passages in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke bear witness. *The true view is that the divine life was lived under human conditions by Jesus, and human perfection is manifested supremely by it* ......What the Incarnation of Christ actually signifies, or what are the relations between Father, Son and Holy Ghost, were bitterly discussed in the early days of the Christian Church; and since then scores of theologians and philosophers have endeavoured to reveal the mystery......A much nobler idea is that the spirit of love in a divine sense pervades the universe and is revealed by the response of humanity—Christian or Pagan—to it......This is the view which some leading modern Churchmen take of the Christian doctrine of Incarnation; and it is expressed in *Scientific Theory and Religion* by the Bishop of Birmingham in the following words: 'With Rashdall I postulate that there is a certain community of nature between God and man, that all human minds are reproductions 'in limited modes' of the Divine Mind, that in all true human thinking

there is a reproduction of the Divine Thought; and, above all, that in the highest ideals which the human conscience recognises there is a revelation of the ideal eternally present in the Divine Mind.' *It would appear from this interpretation that incarnation means much the same as inspiration* when applied to moral or religious teaching, and that both are of the nature of responses to an influence permanently pervading the universe......*All spiritual light may thus be said to come from the 'Father of Light', and all noble inspiration, whether in Buddha, Confucius, Christ, Mohammad, or any other guide to godliness, to be derived from the same source*......In recent years it has become increasingly evident that traditional beliefs cannot have a place in progressive thought apart from scientific knowledge and historical evidence."[1]

Nothing, however, makes it more evident than the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on *Doctrine in the Church of England*, prepared after fifteen years of deliberation, and published in 1938. The Report represents "an attempt to bring conflicting schools of thought concerning certain Christian doctrines, which have been the subject of much controversy within the Church of England itself, into friendly relationships". It forms a landmark in the history of Christian doctrine and there is no wonder that the less advanced but more consistent Christians regard it as a "capitulation to the forces of modernism and scientific materialism", and have, consequently, raised the question: "whether the Church of England should include clergymen who adopt these modern views, or accept only those who can conscientiously subscribe to Articles of Faith, or repeat Creeds, the meanings of which, in the minds of most of their flock, are those attached to traditional Christian doctrine?" The Church has sought to get over this difficulty by

1 Sir Richard Gregory : *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, pp. 211—218.

making a distinction between private and public teaching, and thus a clergyman is free as a student to express his convictions, but bound in his official capacity to conform to the confession of the Church! How far this face-saving device will work remains to be seen.

The Report embodies in itself such heretical teaching that its publication would have been impossible a hundred years ago and its authors would surely have been burnt at the stake. Among the doctrines on which definite pronouncements have been made, those of fundamental importance are: the Infallibility of the Bible, the Virgin Birth, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, the occurrence of Miracles, the Christian theory of Creation, the Biblical view of the Evil Spirits.

The authors of the Report have decided that: (1) The inerrancy or infallibility of the text of Holy Scripture can no longer be maintained in view of increased knowledge; (2) The Virgin Birth, the Resurrection in its physical features, and the Ascension into Heaven, should be interpreted symbolically; (3) As regards miracles, they believe it to be "more congruous with the wisdom and majesty of God that He should never vary the regularities of Nature"; (4) Creation may be regarded as a continuous process, instead of a universe summoned into existence at a particular epoch: (5) As to evil spirits, these can be understood symbolically, and Christ Himself, even when He spoke of Satan, shared (erroneously!) the current belief of His time as to the existence of devils.

THE LAST HOPE OF SURVIVAL

Whether the new interpretations of the articles of faith and dogmas of religion are true or not one fact emerges clearly from the foregoing discussions, namely, that traditional Christianity—the Christianity of the Bible, of St. Paul and other Apostles, of the early Fathers of the Church, of the vast majority of Christians from the earliest times to the present day—cannot prove its *bona fides* and cannot, therefore, survive the scientific and historical criticism. The Christian leaders are conscious of it, but their inherited emotional attachment to the Church makes it impossible for them to see straight and solve the enigma by direct method. They hoodwink and deceive not only the Christian masses but also the world at large. They catch hold of one subterfuge, and, when that fails, they manufacture another. Examples of this have been already noticed. The latest and probably the best attempt is that in which, while admitting the Pagan antecedents of Christianity and the untrustworthy character of the Bible, a case is made out for Christianity by presenting it as the natural development and synthesis of the ancient mystery cults and philosophical creeds of Europe, particularly Hellenism, and thus appealing to what might be termed as the 'national' or 'racial' instinct of the European peoples. Christianity is thus made to appear as a purely European religion and is virtually alienated from its Judaic and Semitic

background. The inconsistency of such a course is apparent, but the authors of this attempt try to overcome this inconsistency with the force of their rhetoric. The Rev. Dr. W. R. Inge has developed the theory fully and it will do well to quote him in detail. He says:[1]

"The Christian Church was the last great creative achievement of the classical culture. It is neither Asiatic nor medieval in its essential character. It is not Asiatic; Christianity is the least Oriental of all the great religions.[2] The Semites either shook it off and reverted to a Judaism purged of its Hellenic elements, or enrolled themselves with fervour under the banner of Islam. Christian missions have had no success in any Asiatic country. Nor is there anything specifically medieval about Catholicism. It preserved the idea of Roman imperialism, after the secular empire of the West had disappeared, and they kept the tradition of the secular empire alive......Nor were the early Christians so anxious as is often supposed to disclaim continuity (with Hellenism). At first, it is true, their apologetic was directed to proving their continuity with Judaism; but Judaism ceased to count for much after the destruction of the Holy City in A.D. 70, and the second century apologists' appeal for toleration on the ground that the best Greek philosophers taught very much the same as what Christians believe. 'We teach the same as the Greeks,' says Justin Martyr, 'though we alone are hated for what we teach.' 'Some among us,' says Tertullian, 'who are versed in ancient literature, have written books to prove that we have embraced no tenets for which we have not the support of common and public literature.' 'The teachings of Plato,' says Justin again, 'are not alien to those of Christ; and the same

1 *The Church in the World*, Chaps: "Hellenism in Christianity" and "Science and Theology", pp. 109 *et seq.*

2 Elsewhere he says: "As a great historical institution, Christianity can be characterised only as the religion of the white race." (*Op. cit.*, p. 200).

is true of the Stoics.' 'Heraclitus and Socrates lived in accordance with the divine Logos,' and should be reckoned as Christians. Clement says that Plato wrote 'by inspiration of God'. Augustin, much later, finds that 'only a few words and phrases' need be changed to bring Platonism into complete accord with Christianity. The ethics of contemporary Paganism, as Harnack shows with special reference to Porphyry, are almost identical with those of the Christians of his day...... *There are few other examples in history of so great a difference between appearance and reality. Outwardly, the continuity with Judaism seems to be unbroken, that with paganism to be broken. In reality the opposite is the fact*.... The truth is that the Church was half Greek from the first, though, as I shall say presently, the original Gospel was not. St. Paul was a Jew of the Dispersion, not of Palestine, and the Christianity to which he was converted was the Christianity of Stephen, not of James the Lord's brother. His later epistles are steeped in the phraseology of the Greek mysteries. The Epistles to the Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel are unintelligible without some knowledge of Philo, whose theology is more Greek than Jewish. In the conflict about the nature of the future life, it was the Greek eschatology which prevailed over the Jewish. St. Paul's famous declaration, 'We look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal,' is pure Platonism and quite alien to Jewish thought. *Judaic Christianity was a local affair, and had a very short life*...... Christianity at first sought for its credentials in Judaism, though the Jews saw very quickly that it 'destroyed the Law'. The belief of the Reformers was plausible; for they rejected just those parts of Catholicism which had nothing to do with Palestine, but were taken over from the old Hellenic or Hellenistic culture. But the residuum was less Jewish than Teutonic. On one side, indeed, the Reformation was a return to Hellenism from

Romanism......The Reformation was a revolt against Latin theocracy and the hereditary paganism of the Mediterranean peoples. It was not really a return to pre-Hellenic Christianity......Christian Platonism has nowhere had a more flourishing record than in Protestant Britain......In conclusion, what has the religion of the Greeks to teach us that we are most in danger of forgetting? In a word, it is a faith that *Truth* is our friend, and that the knowledge of Truth is not beyond our reach. *Faith* in honest seeking is at the heart of the Greek view of life...... The choice before us is between a 'post-rational' traditionalism, fundamentally sceptical, pragmatistic, and intellectually dishonest, and a trust in reason which rests really on faith in the divine Logos, the self-revealing soul of the universe. It is the belief of the present writer that the unflinching eye and the open mind will bring us again to the feet of Christ, to whom Greece, with her long tradition of free and fearless inquiry, became a speedy and willing captive, bringing her manifold treasures to Him, in the well-grounded confidence that he has not come to destroy but to fulfil......Organised religion is not, in modern times, one of the strongest forces in human affairs. As compared with patriotism and revolutionary aims, it has shown itself lamentably weak. The strength of Christianity is (like Platonic mysticism), in transforming the lives of individuals—of a small minority, certainly, as Christ clearly predicted, but a large number in the aggregate. To rescue a little flock, here and there, from materialism, selfishness and hatred, is the task of the Church of Christ in all ages alike, and there is no likelihood that it will ever be otherwise."

DIVINE REVELATION AND HUMAN MODIFICATION

There was a time when no Christian could even think of questioning the validity of, not to say of improving upon, any dogma of his faith. He claimed that Christianity was a divinely revealed religion, and he was, therefore, consistent in holding that it could not be modified or improved. But when modern criticism smashed Christianity to pieces, and all hope of winning the battle for the biblical and historical Christianity was lost, this principle was changed. An honest course would have been either to hold on to Christianity in spite of all the forces arrayed against it, or to renounce it altogether. But that would have perhaps meant a choice between the devil and the deep sea. The easier course was to change first the connotation of the term 'divine revelation' itself and then to recast and improve the faith. Sir Richard Gregory supports this newly adopted course in these words: "Just as in scientific investigations, hypothesis......is subject to modification in the light of increased knowledge, so in matters of theological doctrine, orthodoxy is not static, but must vary in connotation with increase of understanding and a clearer view of the cosmic process. Further, such understanding may bring about change in forms of belief, without affecting faith in the central doctrine of Christianity......It

may seem that to hold such a view of the relation of the evolution of theological dogma to the development of scientific thought is to make the validity of religious belief dependent upon the finite intelligence of man and to be incompatible with the tenets of a religion which takes its stand upon divine revelation. Yet it is possible to regard both the growth of scientific knowledge and the development of dogma, each in its own respective field, as two sides, two aspects of the same process—the search for truth, in which the Divine Purpose is revealed gradually to man *pari passu* with the preparation of his heart and intellect to receive it with understanding."[1]

For all honest Christians, however, such a point of view is fallacious and dishonest. Thus, for instance, the Very Rev. Dr. Mansell, formerly Dean of St. Paul's and a much greater theological authority than Sir Gregory, observes: "Many who would shrink with horror from the idea of rejecting Christ altogether, will yet speak and act as if they were at liberty to set up for themselves an eclectic Christianity, separating the essential from the superfluous portion of Christ's teaching, deciding for themselves how much is permanent and necessary for all men, and how much is temporary and designed only for a particular age and people. Yet if Christ is indeed God manifest in the flesh, it is surely not less impious to attempt to improve His teachings than to reject it altogether. Nay, in one respect it is more so, for it is to acknowledge a doctrine as the revelation from God and, at the same time, to proclaim that it is inferior to the wisdom of man." Further comment is superfluous.

1 *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, pp. 222, 223.

NON-CHRISTIAN THEISTS

Those Westerners who conscientiously forsake Christianity may be broadly classified into two groups. One group, which succumbs to atheistic free-thought, we have already noticed. The views of the other group, which retains belief in a religious orientation of life, may now be presented. This group may again be divided into two: (1) Those who try to build up their own systems of belief on a theistic basis; (2) those who embrace Islam or some other non-Christian faith.

Most moderate and balanced among the members of the first group is Mr. H.G. Wells, who has very ably presented his point of view in the following statement:[1]

"And here, perhaps, before I go on to the question of Conduct, is the place to define a relationship to that system of faith and religious observance out of which I and most of my readers have come. How do these beliefs on which I base my rule of conduct stand to Christianity?

"They do not stand in any attitude of antagonism. A religious system so many-faced and so enduring as Christianity must necessarily be saturated with

1 *First and Last Things*, pp. 85—91.

truth even if it be not wholly true. To assume, as the Atheist and Deist seem to do, that Christianity is a sort of disease that came upon civilization, an unprofitable and wasting disease, is to deny that conception of a progressive scheme of rightness which we have taken as our basis of belief. As I have already confessed, the scheme of Salvation, the idea of a process of sorrow and atonement, presents itself to me as adequately true. So far I do not think my new faith breaks with my old. But it follows as a natural consequence of my metaphysical preliminaries that I should find the Christian theology Aristotelian, over-defined and excessively personified. The painted figure of that bearded ancient upon the Sistine Chapel, or William Blake's wild-haired, wild-eyed Trinity, convey no nearer sense of God to me than some mother-of-pearl-eyed painted and carven monster from the worship of the South Islanders. And the Miltonic fable of the offended creator and the sacrificial son! It cannot span the circle of my idea; it is a little thing, and none the less little because it is intimate, flesh of my flesh and spirit of my spirit, like the drawings of my youngest boy. I put it aside as I would put aside the gay figure of a costumed officiating priest. The passage of time has made his canonicals too strange, too unlike my world of common thought and costume. These things helped, but now they hinder and disturb. I cannot bring myself back to them.

"But the psychological experience and the theology of Christianity are only a ground-work for its essential feature, which is the conception of a relationship of the individual believer to a mystical being at once human and divine, the Risen Christ. This being presents itself to the modern consciousness as a familiar and beautiful figure, associated with a series of sayings and incidents that coalesce with a very distinct and rounded-off and complete effect of personality. After we have cleared off all the definitions of theology, he remains, mystically

suffering for humanity, mystically asserting that love in pain and sacrifice in service are the necessary substance of Salvation. Whether he actually existed as a finite individual person, in the opening of the Christian era seems to me a question entirely beside the mark. The evidence at this distance is of imperceptible force for or against. The Christ we know is quite evidently something different from any finite person, a figure, a conception, a synthesis of emotions, experiences and inspiration sustained by and sustaining millions of human souls.

"Now it seems to be the common teaching of almost all Christians that Salvation, that is to say, the consolidation and amplification of one's motives through the conception of a general scheme or purpose, is to be attained through the personality of Christ. Christ is made cardinal to the act of Faith. The act of Faith, they assert, is belief in him.

"We are dealing here, be it remembered, with beliefs deliberately undertaken and not with questions of fact. The only matters of fact material here are facts of experience. If in your experience Salvation is attainable through Christ, then certainly Christianity is true for you. And if a Christian asserts that my belief is a false light and that presently I shall 'come to Christ', I cannot disprove his assertion. I can but disbelieve it. I hesitate even to make the obvious retort.

"*I hope I shall offend no susceptibilities when I assert that this great and very definite personality in the hearts and imagination of mankind does not and never has attracted me. It is a fact I record about myself without aggression or regret. I do not find myself able to associate him with the emotion of Salvation.*

"I admit the splendid imaginative appeal in the idea of a divine-human friend-mediator. If it were

possible to have access by prayer, by meditation, by urgent outcries of the soul to such a being whose feet were in the darkness, who stooped down from the light, who was at once great and little, limitless in power and virtue and one's very brother: if it were possible by sheer will in believing to make and unmake one's way to such a helper, who would refuse such help? But I do not find such a being in Christ. To me the Christian Christ seems not so much a humanized God as an incomprehensibly sinless being, neither God nor man. His sinlessness wears his incarnation like a fancy dress, all his white self unchanged. He had no petty weaknesses.

"Now the essential trouble of my life is its petty weaknesses. If I am to have that love, that sense of understanding fellowship, which is, I conceive, the peculiar magic and merit of this idea of a personal Saviour, then I need someone quite other than this image of virtue, this terrible and incomprehensible Galilean with his crown of thorns, his blood-stained hands and feet. I cannot love him any more than I can love a man upon the rack. Even in the face of torments I do not think I should feel a need for him. I had rather than a hundred times have Botticelli's armed angel in his *Tobit et Florence*. (I hope I do not seem to want to shock in writing these things, but indeed my only aim is to lay my feelings bare). I know what love for an idealized person can be. It happens that in my younger days I found a character in the history of literature who had singular and extraordinary charm for me, of whom the thought was tender and comforting, who indeed helped me through shames and humiliations as though he held my hand. This person was Oliver Goldsmith. His blunders and troubles, his vices and vanities, seized and still hold my imagination. The slights of Boswell, the contempt of Gibbon and all his company save Johnson, the exquisite fineness of spirit in his 'Vicar of Wakefield', and that green suit of his and

the doctor's cane and the love despised, these things together made him a congenial saint and hero for me so that I thought of him as others pray. When I think of that youthful feeling for Goldsmith, I know what I need in a personal Saviour, as a troglodyte who has seen a candle can imagine the sun. But the Christian Christ in none of his three characteristic phases, neither as the magic babe (from whom I am cut off by the wanton and indecent purity of the Virgin Birth), nor as the white-robed, spotless miracles worker, nor the fierce unreal torment of the cross, comes close to my soul. I do not understand the Agony in the Garden; to me it is like a scene from a play in an unknown tongue. The last cry of despair is the one human touch, discordant with all the rest of the story. One cry of despair does not suffice. The Christian's Christ is too fine for me, not incarnate enough, not flesh enough, not earth enough. He was never foolish and hot-eared and inarticulate, never vain, he never forgot things, nor tangled his miracles.

"I could love him I think more easily if the dead had not risen and if he had lain in peace in his sepulchre instead of coming back more enhaloed and whiter than ever, as a postscript to his own tragedy.

"When I think of the Resurrection I am always reminded of the 'happy endings' that editors and actor-managers are accustomed to impose upon essentially tragic novels and plays.

"You see how I stand in this matter, puzzled and confused by the Christian presentation of Christ. *I know there are many who will answer that what confuses me is the overlaying of the personality of Jesus by stories and superstitions and conflicting symbols; they will in effect ask me to disentangle the Christ I need from the accumulated material, choosing and rejecting. Perhaps one may do that. They do, I*

know, so present him as a man inspired, and strenuously, inadequately and erringly presenting a dream of human brotherhood and the immediate Kingdom of Heaven on earth and so blundering to his failure and death. But that will be a recovered and restored person they would give me and not the Christ the Christians worship and declare they love, in whom they find their Salvation.

"When I write 'declare they love' I throw doubt intentionally upon the universal love of Christians for their Saviour. I have watched men and nations in this matter. I am struck by the fact that so many Christians fall back upon more humanized figures, upon the tender figure of Mary, upon patron saints and such more erring creatures, for the effect of mediation and sympathy they need.

"You see it comes to this: that I think Christianity has been true and is for countless people practically true, but that it is not true now for me, and that for most people it is true only with qualifications. Every believing Christian is, I am sure, my spiritual brother but *if systematically I called myself a Christian I feel that to most men I should imply too much and so tell a lie.*

"In the same manner, in varying degree, I hold all religions to be in a measure true. Least comprehensible to me are the Indian formulae, because they seem to stand not on common experience but on those intellectual assumptions my metaphysical analysis destroys. Transmigration of souls without a continuing memory is to my mind utter foolishness, the imagining of a race of children. *The aggression, discipline and submission of Mohammedanism makes, I think an intellectually limited* (?) *but fine and honourable religion—for men. Its spirit, if not its formulae, is abundantly present in our modern world. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, for example, manifestly preaches a Mohammedan God, a modernised Allah with a*

taste for engineering. I have no doubt that in devotion to a virile, almost national Deity, and to the service of His Empire of stern Law and Order, efficiently upheld, men have found and will find Salvation."

CONVERTS TO ISLAM

The rapid deterioration of Christian influence in the West has brought new opportunities to other religions, and of fundamental importance in this connection is the success which Islam has achieved without paid missionaries and in the teeth of many a serious obstacle. The situation created by the success of Islam has alarmed the Christian leaders. For instance, the Rev. S.M. Zwemer writes[1]:

"The old missionary slogan has met with a counter slogan. Islam is challenging the West to accept Mohammed as the hope of humanity...... Mohammed has discovered America.... In North America there are scattered groups numbering, it is true, twelve thousand only but active in their propaganda......In South America, *i.e.*, Brazil, Argentina, Guadeloupe and Guiana, there are over one hundred and ninety thousand Mohammedans. In France the number of Moslems is increasing; in Paris alone there are nearly three thousand......In Australia, Moslems number twenty-five thousand and publish their own magazine......In South Eastern Europe (omitting the scattered groups of

1 *Across the World of Islam*, pp. 19, 20, 21.

Britain and France as negligible in number, but not in influence) there are three and a half million.. ....Statistics are dry and often bewildering; yet it is only by statistics that we can measure the present expansion of a religion which began in the sixth century with a minority of one man who claimed to be God's last messenger......Islam challenges Europe and America......The conversion of Europeans and Americans to Islam has become a stock-in-trade argument against Christianity in Egypt and India."

This is not the proper place to narrate even in brief outline the history of the spread of Islam in the West during the past fifty years of the disintegration of Christianity. Only a passing reference is possible. For instance, *The Evening Chronicle* of London, in its issue for April 15, 1937, estimated the conversion of Britishers to Islam at an average of seven or eight persons per week; and as far back as 1907, *The Freethinker* of London reported:

"About two thousand English people are said to have become Mohammedans during the last twenty years. As this statement occurs in a Christian journal, it is likely to be true. And if it is true, we can be fairly certain that these converts have not been gained from the lower classes in this country. Bearing in mind, too, the immense difficulty Christian missionaries have in gaining converts from the highest classes of Mohammedans we feel fairly confident that this is a better record of captures than Christian missions can produce in spite of their extravagant expenditure."

Professor Louis Massignon makes the following grudging confession regarding the success of Islam among the French:

"Moslem feeling (in French North Africa) is

dominated by a very curious sentiment. It is not merely a hope of enlisting French sympathies, but an ambition to conquer a place not only for themselves as individuals, but for Islam, within the mind and soul of metropolitan France. There are a number of Algerian Moslem writers who possess a perfect mastery of French and seek to make use of it to carry on a propaganda in France itself...... To be noted also is the fact that some Frenchmen here and there have actually become converted to Islam under the influence of North African Moslems, but French women less frequently. It is only in Tunisia, where the spiritual impress of Islam appears to exercise a peculiar fascination upon them, that that we find Frenchwomen becoming Moslems."

A general light was thrown on the Islamic revival in Europe by a writer in the *Yorkshire Post*,[2] who reported that while in 1901, the population of Muslims in Europe was less than 2,000,000, it had gone up to 8,500,000 in thirty years. The chief factor in this increase is the birth of a new missionary spirit which has enabled the European Muslims not only to defend their faith against the conspiracies of Christian leaders but also to launch an offensive against Christianity itself.

A short list of prominent and early converts, prepared offhand, will perhaps give a better idea of the vital influences of Islam, and the Christian missionaries in Muslim lands will do well to compare it with their lists of 'distinguished' converts. Here are a few names:

Ibrahim John Lewis Burckhardt, the famous explorer, and author of *Travels in Nubia, Travels in Syria and Holy Land, Travels in Arabia, Notes on Beduins and the Wahabys, Arabic Proverbs;*

1 *Whither Islam* ?, pp. 85, 86.

2 March 16, 1937.

Lord Abdur Rahman Stanley of Alderley, sometime British Ambassador to Turkey, and a member of the House of Lords in the British Parliament;

Monsieur Cherfils, the French publicist and author of *Bonaparte et l'Islam;*

The Rev. Norman, sometime a Methodist missionary, and subsequently the first Islamic missionary to America;

Dr. Haroun Mustafa Leon (better known as Sheykhül Islam Abdullah Quilliam) M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., F.S.P., geologist, philologist, lawyer, missionary, founder of the first British Islamic mission, the Liverpool Muslim Institute and the Liverpool Mosque, Secretaire-General of La Societe Internationale de Philologie Sciences et Beaux-Arts, editor of *The Philomath*, *The Crescent*, *the Islamic World* (1893-1908), author of *The Etymology of the Manx Language*, *Fanatics and Fanaticism*, *The Faith of Islam*, and several other writings on theology, comparative religion, philology and poetry;

Professor Yahya-en-Nasr John Parkinson F.G.S., poet and scholar, author of *The Tales of Muslim Chivalry*, *Paradise in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*, *Sons of Islam*, *The Sword of Banu Hashim*, *Salahuddin*, *etc.;*

Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb, scholar, journalist and diplomat, appointed by President Cleveland as United States' Consul at Manila, founder of the first Islamic mission in the United States, Muslim delegate to the memorable Chicago Parliament of Religions, editor of *The Missouri Republican*, *The St. Joseph Gazette* and *The Moslem World;* author of *Islam*, *Islam in America*, *Muhammad: the Prophet*, etc.;

Major-General Muhammad J.B.B. Dickson of Great Britain;

General Baron Howen of Russia;

The Rev. J. Maynard of the U.S.A.;

Al-Haj Abdur Rahman McBryan, hero of *The Triumphant Pilgrimage*;

Her Highness Princess Khairunnisa Gladys Palmer of Sarawak state (Borneo);

Van Beetam Mohammad Ali, founder of the first Islamic missionary society in Holland;

Dr. Khalid William Sheldrake, world-tourist, lecturer and missionary, founder of the Western Islamic Association, London, editor of *The Minaret*;

Dr. Khalid Banning, Ph.D.;

Dr. Hamid Hugo Marcus, Ph.D.;

Al-Haj Saeed Kraemer of Germany;

Dr. Said Felix Valyi of Switzerland, editor of *La Revue Internationale*, author of *The Political and Spiritual Revolutions in Islam*;

Al-Haj Ali Ahmad Knud Holmboe of Denmark, scholar, journalist and traveller, author of the famous *Desert Encounter*;

Abdullah Uno Kuller, the first Muslim missionary to Sweden;

Gouvernor Merwat, the French statesman;

Col. Donald S. Rockwell of the U.S.A., poet and journalist, editor-in-chief of *Radio Personalities*, author of *Beyond the Brim* and *Bazar of Dreams*;

Maulvi William Bashir Pickard, B.A. (Cantab.),

orientalist and theologian, author of *The Beauties of Islam*;

Habibullah Lovergrove, author of *What is Islam?*;

General Muhammad Tewfiq Killinger of Hungary;

Lord Headley Al-Farooq of Killarney, Ireland;

Sir Omar Hubert Rankin Bart of Argyll, Scotland;

Sir Jalaluddin Lauder Brunton;

Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton;

Lady Buchanan Hamilton;

Lady Zeinab Evelyn Cobbold, traveller and scholar, author of *My Pilgrimage to Mecca, Travels in Kenya*;

Countess Hamida of Schlippenbach (Germany);

Professor Abdullah Arthur Osborne of the Royal Chulalungkorn University of Bangkok;

Muhammad Sadiq Dudley Wright, scholar of Comparative Religion, author of *A Manual of Buddhism*, etc.;

The Rev. Dr. David Benjamin, D.D.;

David Upson, editor of several English dailies in India, founder-editor of *The Moslem Outlook*;

Hamid Paul M. Dare, sometime Asst. Editor of *The Egyptian Gazette*, later on sub-editor of *The Times of India Illustrated Weekly*;

Maulana Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall,[1] translator *par excellence* of the Qur'an, distinguished orientalist, novelist and journalist, traveller, Islamic theologian and missionary, Director of Information Bureau at Hyderbad-Deccan, editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*, founder and editor of *The Islamic Culture*, author of *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, *The Cultural Side of Islam*, *Oriental Encounters*, *Valley of the Nile*, *Said the Fisherman*, etc., etc.;

Dr. Ameen Neville J. Whymant, M.A., Ph.D.;

Professor Dr. Abdul Karim Julius Germanus, Chairman of the Oriental Faculty at the University of Budapest, sometime Nizam Professor of Islamic Studies at the Shantiniketan, author of *The Turkish Literature* and a *Translation and Commentary of the Qur'an* in Hungarian;

Maulana Muhammad Asad Leopold Weiss of Austria, distinguished Islamic theologian and orientalist, author of *Islam at the Cross-Roads*, *Translation and Commentary of Sahih Al-Bukhari* (a work of profound and deep scholarship), editor of *The Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad and *Arafat*, Lahore;

Baron Omar Rolf Ehrenfels, nobleman and savant of Austria, author of several scholarly books on Sociology.

1 For a detailed appreciation of this great scholar, see his biography *Our Loyal Enemy* by Anne Fremantle.

CONCLUSION: ISLAM AS THE FUTURE RELIGION

"Though there are many Christians in Europe and England," observed Dr. Henry Wilson, bishop of Chelmsford, "It is only in a very limited sense that we can speak of these as Christian countries. Western civilisation......has rejected Christianity."[1]

Will Islam succeed where Christianity has failed? There are distinct signs that Europe is seeking its way to reply to this question in the affirmative. For instance, Lord Lothian, the well-known British statesman, in his Convocation Address to the students of the Aligarh Muslim University, said:[2]

"The day of purely personal religion, or of merely emotional religion, or of the kind of religion which comforts and sustains the individual, partly by precepts governing his ethical conduct, and partly by promising a salvation which will be brought to the test of proof after death has occurred, that day I believe, has passed away.[3] The modern scientific man brings everything, even Truth itself, to the ultimate proof of results. If he is to follow religion, he demands that religion should show him how to set about solving the practical problems of this world, and not merely promise him Nirvana after an

1 *The Sunday Tribune*, Singapore, Aug. 7, 1938. The Archbishop of Canterbury also expressed himself similarly on the eclipse of religion in the West. (*Dawn*, Delhi, May 28th, 1943).

2 *The Muslim University Gazette*, Feb. 1, 1938.

3 That was the day of Christianity and other similar religions.

immense series of re-births, or a heaven whose nature is indeterminate and which can only be reached through the portal of death. Religion must not only give him, as Sir Muhammad Iqbal has endeavoured to show (in his *Religious Thought in Islam*), the key to the riddle of the universe; it must show him, with scientific accuracy and results, how to control the new forces which now threaten to destroy rather than to benefit mankind, and how he is to overcome unmerited unemployment, undeserved inequality, oppression, exploitation, war, and other collective ills, as well as the personal and family discords which threaten his individual happiness."[1]

Professor H.A.R. Gibb of the University of London who combines his intimate knowledge of the West with that of Islam and who is therefore entitled to speak more authoritatively, is more definite and outspoken. His stirring appeal to the Western world deserves to be inscribed in letters of gold on the portals of every House of Parliament in Europe and America[2]:—

"Islam cannot deny its own foundations and live, and *in its foundations we have seen that Islam belongs to and is an integral part of the larger western society. It is the complement and counterbalance to European civilization, nourished at the same springs, breathing the same air*. In the broadest aspect of history, what is now happening between Europe and Islam is the reintegration of western civilization, artificially sundered at the Renaissance and now reasserting its unity with overwhelming force. The student of history, though fearfully conscious of the pitfalls of analogy, cannot help recalling two earlier (though even then not the earliest) moments in this secular process of creative interaction between the two halves of the western world. It was the glory

1 This is the mission of Islam.

2 *Whither Islam?*, pp. 376—379.

and the greatness of the Roman Empire that it united them under its *imperium* and that from that unity were born the spiritual forces which have governed the course of western history ever since. Halfway between that age and ours occurred the first great intellectual adventure of Islam, when it absorbed the heritage of Hellenism and brought it to a new flowering, the seeds from which contributed to the Renaissance in Europe.

"The process could not end there. It is going on before our very eyes, on a wider and vaster scale, though the contrast offered by the Islamic world as a whole to the amazing technical progress of Europe may still blind us to it; and it may be that the sequel will be the same, that we must wait upon the Islamic society to restore the balance of western civilization upset by the one-sided nature of that progress......At all events Islam stands side by side with Europe in distinction from the true Oriental societies of India and the Far East...... For the fullest development of its own cultural and economic life Islam cannot do without the cooperation of European society; *for the fullest development of its cultural life, particularly of its spiritual life, Europe cannot do without the forces and capacities which lie within Islamic society.* Only by the restoration of that interaction which they enjoyed under the Roman Empire can both recover and exert their full powers.

"*Within the Western world Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian communism, it has not yet succumbed to that obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristic of present-day Europe and present-day Russia alike. Its social ethic has been admirably summed up by Professor Massignon: 'Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of the contribution of each citizen by the*

tithe to the resources of the community; it is hostile to unrestricted exchange, to banking capital, to state loans, to indirect taxes on objects of prime necessity, but it holds to the rights of the father and the husband, to private property, and to commercial capital. Here again it occupies an intermediate position between the doctrines of bourgeois capitalism and Bolshevist communism.'

"*But Islam has a still further service to render to the cause of humanity.* It stands after all nearer to the real East than Europe does, and it possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and cooperation. No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Moslem communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Moslem communities in China and the still smaller community in Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. *If ever the opposition of the great societies of East and West is to be replaced by cooperation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problem with which Europe is faced in its relation with the East. If they unite, the hope of a peaceful issue is immeasurably enhanced. But if Europe, by rejecting the cooperation of Islam, throws it into the arms of its rivals, the issue can only be disastrous for both.*"

ISLAM

So set thy purpose for religion as a man by nature upright—the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created Man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most men know not.

—Al-Qur'an, XXX: 30.

V

A FUNDAMENTAL VIEW OF ISLAM

UNIVERSE

WHAT is the character of the universe which we inhabit, and how are we related to it? These are the two fundamental questions which have confronted all religions and philosophies of the world, and each religious and philosophical system has tried to answer them in its own way.

Closely connected with these questions is the problem of the nature of relationship between mind and matter—between the 'spiritual', and the 'bodily' aspects of life, and a solution of this problem alone can form the basis of our world-view and our life-programme.

There are three distinct answers offered to our inquiry in this connection, namely: (1) by the pre-Islamic religions; (2) by the post-Islamic empirical thought of the West; (3) by Islam.

(1) The Pre-Islamic religions were deeply impressed by the notion of an acute conflict between man's moral and physical existence, or in other words, between 'the biological within' and 'the mathematical without'. This dualistic idea led them ultimately to find a way for the affirmation of the spiritual self in man in the rejection of the physical reality as either meaningless or dangerous. Hinduism

regarded the world of matter as *maya*, namely, illusion, and prescribed a life of renunciation for the spiritual development of its devotees. Buddhism considered the physical world an obstruction in the onward march of the soul and pointed to the annihilation of the individual self and the severance of its emotional links with the material world as the way to achieve *nirvana*. Christianity similarly recognised the antagonism between the physical and spiritual aspects of life and conceived the world of matter, or to use a more Christian term, the world of the flesh, as essentially the playground of Satan. Consequently, it standardised perfection in the type of the ascetic saint.

Such a despising attitude towards the material aspect of life affects humanity in two ways. Firstly, it shuts the door to all material progress, not to speak of scientific advancement, because our indulgence in material pursuits is considered detrimental to the ideal of spiritual self-realisation. Secondly, it gives rise to a perpetual conflict within us, because on one side is the religious call to shun the world, while on the other side exists the natural urge to enjoy it. Such a state of affairs can only culminate in creating a continuous feeling of bad conscience and thus defeat the very purpose of our idealistic attitude.[1]

1 "If we mechanically applied, as rules of conduct, Christ's ideals of temper, we are certain, from common sense, that universal pauperism, lawlessness and national extinction would follow." (The Ven. J. M. Wilson, D.D. : *What it is to be a Christian*).

Renan, in his famous *Life of Jesus*, revolts against the Christian conception of perfection and observes in a rather irreverent tone: "In these fits of severity Jesus went so far as to abolish all natural ties. His requirements (for the Kingdom of Heaven) had no longer any bounds. Despising the healthy limits of man's nature, he demanded that he should exist only for him, that he should love him alone............The harsh and gloomy feeling of distaste for the world and excessive self-abnegation which characterises Christian perfection, was originated not by the refined and cheerful moralist of earlier days, but by a sombre giant whom a kind of presentiment was drawing more and more out of the pale of humanity. We should almost say that, in these moments of conflict with the most legitimate cravings of the heart, Jesus had forgotten the pleasure of living, of seeing and feeling."

(2) The post-Islamic empirical thought of the West adopts a path which is radically different from the pre-Islamic idealism. It asserts that the world of matter alone is real and worthy of our attention and that the realisation of human destiny lies in the conquest of Nature with the ultimate aim of achieving the highest amount of physical pleasure. It ignores all transcendental values and spiritual considerations simply because they do not fall within the scope of empirical sciences. There is only one criterion of ethics which it recognises and that is the criterion of practical utility for the enhancement of the earthly or 'carnal' pleasures of man.

Now, the physical world being essentially a battle-field of conflicting appearances, an exclusively materialistic interpretation of Reality, even though it may be concealed behind the otherwise fascinating mask of scientific spirit, is bound to unbalance human life. This what the West is experiencing today. Nations are running at the throats of each other and individuals are indulging in the pleasures of the flesh in a way which precludes all possibilities of life's spiritual expression. Peace and piety both have been thrown away to winds.[1]

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1 The second world-war bears eloquent testimony to the frustration of Peace, while the following illustration from the United States of America shows the devastating effects of the libertarian philosophy on human piety :

1. Crime costs about 40,000,000 dollars a day.
2. Prison population has nearly doubled since 1927.
3. The homicide rate is the largest in the world.
4. This rate has doubled in the last thrity years.
5. American racketeering schemes cost twice as much money every year as it takes to support the Federal Government.
6. About 1,500,000 felonies are committed every year.
7. A major crime is committed every twenty-four hours.
8. A murder is committed every forty minutes.
9. The surgeon-general of the United States has been obliged to head a campaign against the national peril of venereal disease.

(*The Straits Times*, Singapore, May 5, 1938).

(3) What, then, is the message of Islam which stands between the ancient world which stressed the exclusive validity of the spiritual aspect of life and the modern world which interprets all reality in terms of matter? Has it any solution to offer to reconcile this sharp antagonism; has it any teaching to give in the light of which we may develop all our faculties evenly and work out our destiny without prejudice against either our natural surroundings and the physical conditions of our life or our idealistic yearnings, which are certainly not an illusion but a positive reality and are ingrained in our very nature?

To start with: Islam does not consider the universe as composed of two self-existing and conflicting entities. It conceives all life as a unity because it proceeds from the Divine Oneness, and reality, according to it, is neither material nor mental but "a realm in which thought and thing, fact and value, are inseparable, neither having any existence apart from its correlative; the real world is a coherent organic unity, spaceless and timeless, but including all happenings in space and time in their proper relations to itself."

In addition to this principle of harmony, Islam emphasises the purposive nature of all existence, whether spiritual or physical. Thus says God in the Qur'an:

"We have not created the Heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in sport: We have not created them but for a serious end: but the greater part of them understand not." (XLIV: 38, 39).

Thus our earthly surroundings are not a meaningless projection of the play of blind forces—a mere empty shell with no content. Nay, the tiniest particle of sand, the smallest drop of water, the frailest rose-leaf is full of meaning and music and functions under a definite and well-planned Divine scheme.

MAN

This being the character of the universe, what is the nature of man? Should we conceive him as a being who is originally born low and who cannot attain the pinnacle of purity and perfection except through the tragedy of renouncing the worldly pleasures or of passing through a continuous ordeal of transmigration? This is the way Hinduism, Buddhism and some other religions go. Or, should we believe him to have been born in sin and therefore incapable of working out his destiny except through a mysterious Divine sacrifice? This is the doctrine of Christianity. To these questions Islam replies in the negative. It is emphatic in its assertion that man is born sinless and is the chosen of God, as we read in the Qur'an:

"Of the goodliest fibre We created man." (XCV: 4).

"Afterwards his Lord chose him (Adam) for Himself and was turned towards him and guided him." (XX: 122).

"And it is He who hath made you His vicegerents on the earth." (VI: 165).

Starting his life with a sinless birth, man is entitled, or we might say, destined, as an evolutionary being, to scale the loftiest heights of perfection and to surpass God's all creation, including the angels, in his uniqueness and purity. Thus we read in the Qur'an:

"It needs not that I swear by the sunset redness and by the night and its gatherings and by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onward." (LXXXIV: 16—19).

What then should be our attitude towards our material environment? Should it consist in renouncing the world and repressing our physical desires? No. Islam says nothing of the kind. Instead of recognising a conflict between the moral and physical existence of man, it emphasises the co-existence of these two aspects as the natural basis of life. It maintains that our earthly sojourn is a possible factor in the Divine scheme of creation and a necessary stage in the evolution of our soul-life. Consequently, it seeks the affirmation of the spiritual self in man, not in renouncing the world of matter, but in the active endeavour to master it with a view to discover a basis for a realistic regulation of life. "The life of the ideal consists not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being." It is therefore impossible for Islam to despise our earthly existence and activities, and here it differs radically with other religions of the world.

This realistic attitude of Islam may not, however, be identified with that of the modern West. The latter ignores our spiritual existence altogether and regards our earthly career as an end-in-itself, and that in a way which amounts to worship. Islam

on the other hand, conceives it not as an end but as a means to a higher spiritual end.

And what is that higher end? It is submission to the Will of Allah and seeking His pleasure, as the Qur'an says:

"Say: Verily, my worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds, Who hath no partner." (VI: 162-163).

Viewed in this light, all our worldly actions, including the most insignificant ones, are transformed into religious acts, the moment we give them a spiritual orientation, namely, the moment we perform them with the consciousness that we are acting in the light of Allah's commands. In fact, Islam conceives the whole life of a Muslim as a life of continuous worship, for says God in the Qur'an:

"I have not created the Jinn and humankind but that they shall worship Me." (LI:56).

Thus the notion of worship in Islam is also radically different from that of other religions. In Islam there is no such distinction as 'religious' and 'secular'. Every act of a true Muslim is a religious act because he has to perform all his works in obedience and conformity to Divine injunctions and has to dedicate all his faculties, spiritual or physical, to the cause of God's eternal scheme. Devotion and submission to God in this sense constitute the very meaning of our life in Islam.[1]

1 "The highest form of religious ethic is that in which the aim of conduct is complete and implicit obedience to what is conceived to be the Will of God.........(this obedience) may become a joyous and spontaneous acceptance of a mode of life, such as it is conceived would be consonant with the nature of God, subject to such limitations of the flesh as are ineradicable—the ideal of saintliness. Hence arises the desire for uprightness as an end-in-itself, either with a view to reward, if not in this world, in the next, or pursued selflessly for its own sake. This concept of religious ethic had led to the highest idealism in human conduct." (Sir Richard Gregory: *Religion in Science and Civilisation*, p. 63)..

This being the case, it was absolutely necessary that Islam should not confine itself to the explanation of the metaphysical relations between man and his Creator but should also define exactly the relations between the individual and the society. And this Islam has accomplished to its eternal glory by giving us an exhaustive guidance which does not leave even the most trivial actions of our life untouched.[1]

1 For an exposition of this exhaustive guidance consult the author's *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, Karachi, 1973.

PRINCIPLE OF MOVEMENT

The essential nature of the Islamic view of life must have become clear from what has been said above. But it is mostly the principle of 'unity in life' that has been emphasised so far. There is, however, another fundamental principle also, namely, 'movement in life', which needs some elucidation. In this connection, the discussion might be confined to an examination of Islam's attitude towards the empirical sciences, which is, however, the direct outcome of its realistic conception of Nature and Man.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (God bless him!) stands alone in the religious annals of the world as the advocate of scientific inquiry. The pages of the Qur'an abound with passages which invite our attention to an empirical study of the natural phenomena and emphasise the conquest of nature by man. In fact, the Inductive Method of inquiry, which is the basis of modern scientific and philosophical thought, is one of the most valuable gifts of the Qur'an to the world. Let me cite here just a few Qur'anic verses to substantiate this statement. It says:

"Assuredly, in the creation of the Heavens and of the earth; and in the alternation of night and day; and in the ships which pass through the sea with what is useful to man; and in the rain which God sendeth down from Heaven, giving life to the earth after its death, and scattering over it all kinds of cattle; and in the clouds that are made to do service

between the Heavens and the earth—are signs for those who understand." (II: 164).

"Can they not look at the camels, how they are created; and to the heaven, how it is upraised; and to the mountains, how they are rooted?" (LXXXVIII: 17-19).

"And among His signs are the creation of the Heavens and of the earth, and your variety of tongues and colour. Herein truly are signs for all men." (XXX: 22).

"And He it is who hath made subservient to you whatever is in the Heavens and on the earth." (XLV : 13).

It is no wonder, therefore, that during the age of Islam's glory, its followers became the pioneers of civilization and the inaugurators of the modern scientific era. It might sound strange to those who are accustomed to hear that Islam obstructs the way to progress and is an enemy of scientific learning, and that the Muslims are a race of barbarians. The truth lies just the opposite way, and it can honestly be said that but for Islam there would have been no modern scientific civilization. Let me quote Briffault, a great non-Muslim authority of the West. He says in his reputed work, *The Making of Humanity:*

"Neither Roger Bacon nor his later name-sake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe........Science is the momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world......(though) it was not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life." (p. 202).

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture; it owes its existence. The ancient world was, as we saw, pre-scientific. The Astronomy and Mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatised in Greek culture; The Greeks systematised, generalised and theorised, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to Greek temperament......What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of Mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs." (p. 190).

A vital point of difference between the spirit of modern West and the spirit of Islam may however be emphasised again. While the modern West has employed science mostly for the satisfaction of its craving after power and pleasure, Islam seeks in the scientific inquiry a means to the service of humanity and spiritual elevation. How beautifully has the Qur'an inculcated the latter idea in the following verse:

"Verily in the creation of the Heavens and of the earth, and in the succession of night and day, are signs for men of understanding, who, standing and sitting and reclining, bear God in mind and reflect on the creation of the Heavens and of the earth, and say: Oh, our Lord! Thou hast not created all this in vain; Glory be to Thee." (III: 190-191).

CONCLUSION

Islam is not merely a faith, a 'religion', a creed. It is a way of life—a life to be lived. It does not respond only to man's religious yearnings, but to human life as a whole. It does not give us only an infallible metaphysics, but also a comprehensive and sublime code of individual and social ethics, a sound economic system, a just political ideology, and many other things besides. It is not a solitary star, but a whole solar system, encompassing the whole and illuminating the whole.

It should be evident, therefore, that the foregoing very brief discussion of a few Islamic verities forms only an introduction to the study of Islam. It is meant to stimulate thought, to bring out the fundamental distinction of Islam from non-Islam, and to show that the notion of religion in Islam is infinitely richer and more sound than any other to which humanity subscribes.

I am confident that those of my Christian readers who undertake an impartial and detailed study of Islam will come to the same conclusion and will join me in saying:

God's choicest blessings be on His beloved Prophet Muhammad for the Light and Guidance he brought to humanity!

APPENDIX

ISLAM AMONG RELIGIONS[1]

The Holy Qur'an claims that all the problems of human life that relate directly or indirectly to the fulfilment of human destiny, in the earthly environment as well as in the next world, have been dealt with therein explicitly or implicitly:

"....And We have revealed unto thee (O Muhammad!) the Book (*i.e.*, the Qur'an) as an (explicit and implicit) exposition of everything (requisite in respect of perfect Guidance)...." (xvi: 89).

That comprehensive guidance has been projected, however, under the name of *al-Islam* ('submission to God')—termed as 'Islam' in popular usage—and on the basis of *Faith in God* and all that it implies. As such, it is *theocentric*, as distinct from the *anthropocentric* and the *nihilistic*.

The terms '*theocentric*', '*anthropocentric*' and '*nihilistic*' refer to three basic attitudes towards Reality that humanity has entertained in history. Among the better-known and representative systems —or, we may call them 'religions' in the broadest

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1 Taken from Vol. I of the author's monumental masterpiece *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, World Federation of Islamic Missions, Karachi, 1973.

sense of the word, the broad[1] classification emerges, subject to certain inherent reservations, thus: systems like Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and certain schools of thought in Hinduism, stand in the civilised sector, and systems like Shintoism stand in the primitive sector, of the first category; systems like Buddhism, Jainism and Confucianism relate to the second; and systems like Marxist Dialectical Materialism, and Atheistic Existentialism fall under the third.

In the *theocentric* view *at its highest*, the Ultimate Reality is supra-cosmic, personal and divine. It is 'Being'. It is God. It is the fountain-head of the highest values and ideals. It reveals itself in the Cosmic Order, which is its creation. Man is 'from God and for God'. He is the pilgrim of eternity with his source of existence and capabilities in the Ultimate Reality, whose Grace he should seek. His function is to promote harmony with the Ultimate Reality through worship, in order to acquire perfection adequate to his nature. His ideal is to reflect the Divine Attributes in the mirror of his personality, thereby fulfilling his destiny. His outlook is positive and optimistic, and is grounded in the concept of 'affirmation of personality'.[2]

In the *anthropocentric* view *at its highest*, the Ultimate Reality is intra-cosmic and impersonal. It is 'Becoming'. It is immanent in the Cosmic Order, which consists of the 'natural' and the 'supra-natural'. Man is the child of the cosmos. The 'supra-natural' element in him is the source of his power. His function is to renounce the 'natural', which is evil. His ideal is to efface his personality

1 It should be noted that there is a certain amount of intermixing of concepts and attitudes which damage the logic of structural purity in respect of classification. Therefore, only a broad classification with reservations is possible in a summary appraisal.

2 This statement of the theocentric view is genuinely and comprehensively correct in respect of Islam alone. Because : for instance, Christianity presents the picture of a mixture of certain elements of the theocentric view with certain elements of the anthropocentric view.

for attaining freedom from the bondage of the 'natural'. His outlook is negative, because salvation lies through Renunciation. His worship bears reference to ascetic exercises and magical concepts. His ethics is the ethics of asceticism. His goal is the submergence of his personality in the Impersonal Reality.

In the *nihilistic* view *at its highest*, the Ultimate Reality is Illusion, and the cosmos is mere accident. Man is an ephemeral speck of mechanical activity in a chance-order. His power lies in the cunningness that he may be able to employ for 'making the best of a bad bargain'. His ideal is the acquisition of maximum physical happiness, towards which all human struggle is conceived to be directed. The outlook that emerges logically for him is incapable of accommodating any element of hope, because of the notion of double tragedy in terms of the world being a chance-order as well as hostile. His approach to the domain of moral behaviour is possible only through the shifting sands of expediency. His destiny is the annihilation of his personality in the all-consuming Illusion.[1]

We have distinguished the *theocentric* from the *anthropocentric* and the *nihilistic* attitudes to Reality, including not only the first but also the second and the third under the category of 'religion'. That we have done on the basis that any system of thought which may *bind* anyone to any specific view of life, together with its emotional and ethical implications, is religion, because the very word 'religion' stands etymologically for the idea of being *bound* or *linked* to something. This is how the concept of religion is viewed in the wider sense. Thus, for instance, Ralph Barton Perry says, referring to Marxism and Buddhism, in his *Realms of Value*[2]:

1 Ref: for instance, Bertrand Russell's "Free Man's Worship" in *Mysticism and Logic*, London, 1969.

2 Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1954.

"Whether one says that Communism is atheistic or that it has made a god of Economic Force depends on whether one is thinking in terms of a particular religion or in terms of religion in general. The god which Communism denies is a particular variety of God—such as the Christian God. The god it affirms is another variety of universal God. Both gods answer the description of God as Cosmic Power viewed from the standpoint of what men take to be their paramount good. It is clear that esoteric Buddhism as well as Marxian Communism recognises no god in the Christian sense. But Buddhism teaches that Nirvana is the supreme good and that the constitution of things—the view of Karma and ultimate illusoriness of existence—permits Nirvana to be attained. Buddhism is thus a religion in its conjoining of a hierarchy of values with a cosmology; and it can even be said to have its god, if by 'god' is meant the saving grace of man's total environment." (p. 464).

However, taking up the *theocentric view* alone, vital differences exist between the different theocentric systems. In the first instance, these systems are divisible into those which claim to be revealed and those which do not. Thus, for example, Islam and Christianity and Judaism lay claim to Divine Revelation as the source of their guidance, while the theocentric systems of Hinduism make no such claim. Then, as we have already seen, the Divine Revelation which Islam projects is unadulterated and authentic, while in the case of Judaism and Christianity it is adulterated and unauthentic. Again, as regards the 'unrevealed' systems, they are divisible into vulgar (or, primitive) and civilised. Hence, going from lower to higher levels, we arrive at four categories: (1) Unrevealed—of the vulgar or primitive level; (2) Unrevealed—of the civilised level; (3) Revealed but adulterated and unauthentic; (4) Revealed and existing in unadulterated and authentic form.

Religions falling under the above categories admit of comparative normative evaluation in seven dimensions, namely: (1) Concept of God; (2) Outlook; (3) Standpoint; (4) Ideal; (5) Standard of Behaviour; (6) Mission; (7) Programme. It is necessary to undertake it here in order to establish the *nature* of Qur'anic Guidance in the perspective of theocentric religions. The evaluation of each category emerges as follows:

I. *Unrevealed: Primitive (Shintoism, etc.):*

(1) *Concept of God:*	Fetish-worship and Nature-worship, representing the quest for the metaphysical Reality at a superstitious level.
(2) *Outlook:*	Superstitious, rather than rational.
(3) *Standpoint:*	Magical, rather than ethical.
(4) *Ideal:*	Satisfaction of immediate wants.
(5) *Standard of Behaviour:*	Acquisition of immediate gains.
(6) *Mission:*	None.
(7) *Programme:*	Performance of rituals.

Japanese Scholars' Verdicts.

The eminent Japanese scholar, Dr. Genchi Kate, who taught the Shinto religion for many years at the Imperial University of Tokyo, evaluates Shintoism in the historical perspective thus:

"Considered in the broadest historical sweep there are three main cultural stages in the

evolution of Shinto. There is, in the first place. the stage of primitive nature-worship or polydemonism; secondly, the stage of higher nature-worship or sheer polytheism; and thirdly, Shinto as an advanced cultural religion wherein beliefs and practices relating to *Kami*-objects have come under the influence of ethical and intellectual influences of a high order. It is at this last named stage that Shinto shows its most definite political pattern."[1]

As regards *Kami*, the key-term of Shintoism, Motoori, another eminent Japanese scholar, expounds its implications as follows:[2]

"Speaking in general, *Kami* signifies, in the first place, the deities of heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the spirits worshipped in the shrines.

"It seems hardly necessary to add that it also includes human beings. It also includes such objects as birds, beasts, trees, plants, seas, mountains, and so forth. In ancient usage, anything whatsoever, which was outside the ordinary, which possessed superior power, or which was awe-inspiring, was called *Kami*. Eminence here does not refer to the superiority of nobility, goodness or meritorious deeds. Evil and meritorious things, if they are extraordinary and dreadful, are called *Kami*.

"It is also evident that among human beings who are called *Kami* the successive generations of sacred emperors are all included. The fact

1 Cited in John Clark Archer's *The Great Religions of the Modern World*. p. 153.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 148.

that emperors are called 'distant *Kami*' is because from the point of view of common people they are far separated, majestic and worthy of reverence. In a lesser degree we also find, in the present as well as in ancient times, human beings who are *Kami*. . . . Furthermore, among things which are not human, the thunder is always called 'sounding-*Kami*'. Such things as dragons, the echo, and foxes, inasmuch as they attract attention and are wonderful and awe-inspiring, are also *Kami*. . . ."

II. *Unrevealed: Civilised (Hinduism):*

(**Note:** In respect of this category, we shall deal with Hinduism under two separate headings, viz., (a) Philosophical Hinduism, and (b) Popular Hinduism. This we shall do because of certain very fundamental difficulties. Hinduism is popularly believed to be a consolidated religion and, as such, the oldest among the important religions of the world. Actually, what passes under the name of Hinduism is a collection of different systems of religion, and of different philosophies and mythologies, with a strong colouring of the human element in the historical experiences of Asiatic section of the Aryan race. As such, it is a hybrid melange. At best, it is the record of a rich civilisation of the past—a civilisation that had many elements of merit and many deficiencies and even ugly aspects. An earnest student does find there some profound philosophical discussions, which at times shoot off into the fervour of pure Monotheism—thereby confirming the Qur'-anic stand as to the advent among the Aryans of Divine Messengers the light of whose Message glimmers today, even as in the case of the Messengers whom Judaism and Christianity mention, only through the mists of later distortions. And he finds certain noble moral concepts and words of wisdom and sciences like the science of Yoga. But, he also finds that, unfortunately, humanity cannot benefit from all that any more than it can benefit

from the achievements of the philosophers, the psychologists and the spiritualists of other ancient and modern communities, with all the respective differences in outlooks and statures notwithstanding: because: *firstly*, nothing in Hinduism has any divine sanction, and consequently no seeker of God—quest for God being the very essence of a spiritual religion—can place himself under the control of the subjective findings of the Hindu philosophers and sages (which is the highest that Hinduism can offer); and, *secondly*,all that which may be regarded as worthy of appreciation in any sense is mixed up with an overwhelming and dominating mass of puerile beliefs, ugly practices and inhuman social concepts; and it is impossible for even the most radical among the reformers (who have been appearing since the impact initially of Islam and later on of Modern Thought) to purge Hinduism of all objectionable elements in the name of Hinduism itself without creating a new man-made religion. Moreover, unlike Christianity which has the Bible, and unlike Islam which has the Qur'an, Hinduism has no single consolidated scripture.

The renowned Hindu scholar and leader, Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru says (*The Discovery of India*, p. 37):

> "Hinduism as a faith is vague, amorphous. many-sided, all things to all men. It is hardly possible to define it, or indeed to say definitely whether it is religion or not, in the usual sense of the word. In its present form, and even in the past, it embraces many beliefs and practices, from the highest to the lowest, often opposed to or contradicting each other."

John Clark Archer, the western scholar of Comparative Religion, observes (*The Great Religions of the Modern World* pp : 44-45):

"Hinduism in its vagueness is first of all an

item of the Stone Age. It is so ancient.... Hinduism has had no founder to furnish a basic message, no early leader comparable with Zoroaster, Jesus or Muhammad.... These at least, each in its turn, inspired a 'book of wisdom', a 'gospel', and a 'writing'. Hindus have had no one even like Confucius to edit fully a long, inherited tradition. Strictly speaking, they have had for themselves no such figures as the Jains have in their Vardhaman Mahavira, as Buddhists have in Gotama Sakyamuni or as the Sikhs have in Nanak. In a sense, the founders of Hinduism are legion, their figures as shadowy as 'cloud messengers' of changeful constitution and fitful errand.".

However, taking up Hinduism as *one* religion, as it is understood to be, we shall attempt a scientific classification of the basic concepts that constitute its foundations).

(*a*) *Philosophical Hinduism:*

(1) *Concept of God:*	Pantheism with high philosophical fervour, joined to monotheistic approach, on the one hand, and to philosophised idol-worship, on the other.
(2) *Outlook:* (at its highest).	More speculative than religious.
(3) *Standpoint:*	Mystico-philosophical.
(4) *Ideal:*	Individualistic salvation, through meditation and ascetic exercises, as if human life and the world are essentially evil.

(5) *Standard of Behaviour:* Ascetic.

(6) *Mission:* Salvation (*nukti*) of the individual from the evil of the ever-repeating cycles of earthly existence.

(7) *Programme:* Basically mystico-ascetic exercises.

(b) Popular Hinduism:

(1) *Concept of God:* Nature-worship and Fetish-worship, representing the approach to the metaphysical Reality and grounded in rank Polytheism.

(2) *Outlook:* Superstitious-*cum*-mystical-*cum*-racial.

(3) *Standpoint:* Ritualistic and magical, rather than ethical.

(4) *Ideal:* *Ethically considered:* Preservation of the Social System based on distinctions of race and caste, together with the sanctity of the metaphysics and the ethics from which the said Social System derives its sanction. *Religiously considered:* Deliverance from the painful and inexorable cycle of rebirths.

(5) *Standard of Behaviour:* Adherence to caste-based ethics, as distinct from the universalistic humanistic ethics.

(6) *Mission:* Supremacy of the Hindu Section of the Aryan race.

(7) *Programme:* Performance of religious rituals and pursuit of the earthly requirements of life within a caste-ridden-*cum* autocratic-*cum*-feudalistic-*cum*-capitalistic ethico-politico-economic framework.

III. *Revealed, but Adulterated and Unauthentic:*

(*a*) *Christianity:*

(1) *Concept of God:* Monotheistic, with the concept of a Compound Deity—the Triune God, consisting of three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

(2) *Outlook:* Mystical, earthly life being conceived as incompatible with human yearnings.

(3) *Standpoint:* Mystical.

(4) *Ideal:* Salvation of the individual in the life after death.

(5) *Standard of Behaviour:* Ascetic. In fact, no standard of behaviour or principle of evaluation is needed, because it would necessitate obedience to Law and thus annul the efficacy of Atonement.

(6) *Mission:* To lead its followers into Divine Grace through the

	mystery of Vicarious Atonement.
(7) *Programme:*	Ritualistic and Ascetic exercise for the attainment of 'saintliness'.

(*b*) *Judaism:*

(1) *Concept of God:*	Monotheistic, with the concept of a Single Deity—leaning towards Anthropomorphism and the notion of a Racial Deity.
(2) *Outlook:*	This-worldly, adjusted with the vested interests of the Israelites.
(3) *Standpoint:*	Legalistic and Racialistic.
(4) *Ideal:*	Salvation of the Israelite race alone.
(5) *Standard of Behaviour:*	Pragmatic and bearing reference to the interests of the race.
(6) *Mission:*	Welfare of the narrow group.
(7) *Programme:*	Struggle for making the Israelites the dominant race in respect of their being the 'Chosen People of God'.

IV. *Revealed: Unadulterated and Authentic* (ISLAM *alone*).

(1) *Concept of God:*	Monotheistic. The Islamic deity is not merely 'god' (*ilah*) but '*the* GOD' (*Allah*).

He is not merely an object of ritualistic worship, but the Possessor of all the dimensions of Highest Excellence,—indeed, of Absolute Perfection. He is the Fountain-head of all Values and Ideals. He is the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent, the Infinite, the Absolute, the One and the Indivisible God, Who neither incarnates nor has any Partner or Son or Compeer. He is Transcendent in His Being and Immanent in the cosmos through His Love, Knowledge and Power. He is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Nourisher and the Evolver of everything that constitutes the cosmos, equally. He is the Righteous God Who bestows no special favour on any individual or community on the basis of such distinctions as those of race or colour—nay, even in respect of mere formal labels of 'creed'.

(2) *Outlook:* Universalistic and Integralistic on the basis of spiritual orientation of human life.

(3) *Standpoint:* Dynamic and Comprehensive.

(4) *Ideal:* Realisation of the status of Vicegerency of God for entire humanity.

(5) *Standard of Behaviour:*	Integralistic and Comprehensive, in terms of the concept of 'Fulfilment' and on the basis of the Model of Comprehensive Human Perfection enshrined in the Personality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him!).
(6) *Mission:*	Establishment of all that is good for human beings and eradication of all that is evil, on the basis of godliness and unity of humankind.
(7) *Programme:*	Constant spiritual, moral and intellectual struggle (*Jihad*) for the fulfilment of the above mission in terms of: (*i*) conquest of the Lower Self by the Higher Self; (*ii*) conquest of Evil by Good in respect of Social Order; (*iii*) conquest of Nature for the realisation of 'Vicegerency of God'.

The foregoing discussion reveals two important facts. *Firstly*, the Qur'anic System of Guidance, or, Islam, is grounded in religious approach. It is basically *religion*—religion *par excellence*, in the broader sense as well as in the narrower, or, strict, sense—namely, as implying 'belief in a higher unseen controlling power, with the emotion and morality connected with it'.[1] Hence, it cannot be viewed merely in terms of a conceptual philosophy or a social doctrine. *Secondly*, it is *unique* as regards its normative as well as structural dimensions. In

1 *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary*, section 'R'.

other words, *Islam is religion, but at the same time it stands as a masculine challenge to the generally accepted notions of religion.* This very basic characteristic of Islam emerges more and more prominently as we proceed in our study.[1]

1 For which the reader may consult the author's *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society.*

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